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From a Sketch by H. A. 12

THE OLD SHEKARRY AND HIS GANG.
(A good Day's Sport.)

Printed by F. Nebelwitz

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THE
HUNTING GROUNDS
OF
THE OLD WORLD.

FIRST SERIES.

—
ASIA.

BY

H. A. L.

— THE OLD SHAKESPEARE —

AUTHOR OF "THE EAST-INDIA" "REMARKS ON THE EAST INDIA CO." &c.
1842.

PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

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1842

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“THE OLD SHEKARRY,”

AUTHOR OF “THE CAMP-FIRE,” “REMINISCENCES OF THE FOREST AND THE FIELD,”
ETC. ETC.

“THERE IS A PLEASURE IN THE PATELESS WOODS.”

Third Edition.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, ROBERTS & GREEN.

1865.

203. e. 29.



To

My Mother

The following Pages

Describe of some of the Episodes

of

A Wanderer's Life and a Soldier's Career

Are Affectionately

Dedicated.

P R E F A C E.

THE following pages, descriptive of different incidents in a hunter's career, are selections from a journal written during the leisure moments of a wandering life amidst the various scenes which they attempt to delineate ; and, as they have excited a certain degree of interest amongst a class who have themselves participated in the charms and fascinations of a forest life, the author has laid them before the public, in the hope that some of his comrades, many of whom are "mighty hunters," and abler with the pen than himself, will follow his example, and disseminate the knowledge they have acquired by experience during their sojourns in "the pathless woods;" as their accounts cannot fail to be of intense interest to their brother sportsmen, and a great assistance to the uninitiated, who may wish to follow in their footsteps.

Although the author is well aware that "the grey goose quill" is a more unwieldy instrument in his hands than "the rifle," that has proved a trusty friend

in so many an anxious moment; still, as his descriptions of wild life and hunting adventures have been so far appreciated as to run through two editions, he has endeavoured to render the present one more worthy of public perusal, by making very considerable additions.

The present work is entirely confined to the hunting grounds of Asia; but, in a second series, the author proposes giving some account of *five* exploring expeditions to different parts of Africa, he having hunted all over the country between the Limpopo and Zambesi rivers on the east coast, in Tunis, Algeria, Morocco, the confines of the Sahara, and more recently on the West Coast of Equatorial Africa.

Although he has already made *three* expeditions to the pestilential shores of the West Coast, and has only lately returned, broken down in health (he having been severely wounded whilst on active service against the disaffected tribes near Lagos), he contemplates making one more exploring trip, and purposes traversing the continent of Africa, by starting from the Bights of Benin and working up in a north-easterly direction, towards the regions lately explored by Captains Burton and Speke. The chief object of this expedition will be to determine whether the Victoria Nyanza lake itself is the source of the

Nile, or whether a large river (yet undiscovered) does not flow through the lake, in the same manner that the Rhone traverses the lake of Geneva.

Should the author once more wend his way towards these unknown regions, he will have certain advantages that his friend, the late Captain Speke, had not, namely, the safeguard of a gang of sturdy and well-tried followers. His *companions de voyage* would be selected from the Hausas, a warlike Mussulman tribe that have made their way from the interior towards the West Coast, and are to be found in insulated bodies in most of the towns of the Yoruba district, and more or less throughout the whole extent of country between the territory of Dahomey and the Niger.

Some profess a kind of fealty to the Chief of Sokoto, who is a Mussulman; but others live like independent clans, under leaders whom they term "Sherreefs."

They are a much finer race than any of the coast tribes, being more athletic, enduring, and capable of greater exertion. In character they are superior to most of the African race, being, generally speaking, men "of one word," having some regard for truth, which is more than can be said of any of the coast tribes.

Although Mussulmen, they are the least fanatical

CONTENTS.

PART I.—INDIA.

SECTION I.—THE DECCAN.

CHAPTER I.

HYDERABAD.—MY FIRST DAY'S DEER-STALKING.

Leave of absence obtained.—My Mentor.—Departure.—Abdulla-ben-Ali, the Killadar.—A Banian.—The hill-fort of Bhoonghir.—Old cannon.—Native hospitality.—Visions of deer.—The start.—Plenty of “slots,” but no deer.—The Sambur described.—His habits.—A deer-stalker's qualifications.—Hints.—The trail.—Walter's companion.—Tracking.—The sambur's instinct.—The bark of a buck elk.—The game in view.—An anxious moment.—My first stag.—Two harts die, a third hard hit.—The chase.—Ponto brings him to bay.—A good shot.—Return to camp Page 1

CHAPTER II.

HOG-HUNTING.

The fortress of Golconda.—The Tombs of the Kings.—The gardens.—Persian inscriptions.—The gathering.—Plan of operations.—Reminiscences of the past.—The start.—The rendezvous.—My nag Lal Babba.—A moment of suspense.—The find.—We're away.—The chase.—The first blood.—A purl.—The advantages of being on good terms with one's nag.—The tug of war.—Exciting moments.—The struggle for the spear.—It is won.—The charge.—Mischievous ensues.—The death of the boar.—The wounded hog-hunter.—The death of an old friend.—The trysting-tree.—The trophies.—The return to cantonment. 21

CHAPTER III.

MULKAPOOR.

Our camp.—Mulka-poor.—The patel.—Good news of shekar.—W——'s family.—Scheme for a Nautch.—The Begum.—Her love of good liquor.—The prescription.—Chineah and my shekar gang.—The doctor's ruse.—News of a man-eater.—Departure of the gang.. Page 40

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAN-EATER'S LAIR.

The start.—The man-eater's depredations.—His habits described.—His last victim.—His trail.—We are on his track.—More game.—The scent becomes warm.—The lair.—The remains of many victims discovered.—The plan for the morrow.—A resolution.—W——'s idea of shekar.—We arrive in camp.—The Pill's garden.—The bath.—Dinner.—The doctor's visit to the Begum.—Effect of his medicine.—My future husband.—The nautch arranged 53

CHAPTER V.

A BATTUE.

Preliminary arrangements for the boat.—The doctor's great appearance.—His famous feat.—W—— falls in with tigers.—Fatal accident.—The death of a tiger.—The game warms.—The battue.—Another tiger dies.—The bag of the day.—The Doctor again.—The ceremonies of my gang 70

CHAPTER VI.

THE GANG.

The Begum's invitation accepted.—My shekar gang.—Googooloo's history and the discovery of the Yanadi caste.—Googooloo's gifts.—Insinuations 83

CHAPTER VII.

THE NAUTCH.

The Nautch : its fascinations.—Indian dancing-girls.—Oriental eyes.—
 Their dress and jewels.—Soaping the Begum.—Indian jugglers and
 their tricks.—The celebrated mango-tree.—The sacrifice to Bowani.—
 Explanation.—The Doctor's wonder Page 99

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEATH OF THE MAN-EATER.

News of the man-eater again.—We are once more on his trail.—The
 scent lost.—Googooloo gives tongue.—It warms.—My plan.—Prepa-
 ration.—Execution.—A ticklish moment.—Death of the man-eater.
 —Ceremonies of the shekarries 117

SECTION II.—SOUTHERN INDIA.

CHAPTER IX.

TRICHINOPOLY.

Trichinopoly.—The evil influence of caste in India.—The return of
 Chineah, and our prospects of sport.—My shooting-cart and battery
 described.—Preparations for a start 128

CHAPTER X.

THE SHEVEROYS.

Departure of the gang.—Our start.—The journey.—Salem.—The She-
 veroy hills, and our reception.—Anglo-Indian hospitality.—Claret
 cup.—News of bison and bears.—Googooloo on trail.—We follow.—
 A bull-bison lost.—The news of bears confirmed.—Their habits
 described.—We start for the Bear Hill.—The reconnaissance.—Bears
 afoot.—Their strongholds invested.—A foraging party surprised.—
 Two bears die.—Three more afoot.—Another couple yield their

spoils.—Desperate encounter with an enraged vixen, who almost proved a Tartar.—“The Old Shekarry” in a fix for a time, but wins the game at last.—The bag of the day.—The return Page 143

CHAPTER XI.

BOWANI.

Sankerrydroog.—An adventure with hyenas.—Bowani.—Alligator-fishing.—We start for Andior.—“Gooty,” my shooting pony: his pedigree and achievements.—Small-game shooting.—Antelope stalking.—Andior.—The monkeys and the Brahmins.—Murrel-fishing. 163

CHAPTER XII.

THE COMBEI JUNGLE.

Early rising.—“Tiger’s milk.”—A sloth-bear started.—Combei.—Our encampment.—A salt-lick.—Great bag of deer by night.—Ding ding.—A strange rencontre whilst peafowl-stalking.—Leg-bail.—The death of the tiger.—B——’s sport.—A glorious chase.—The bull-neilghau.—The bag.—A black panther.—Strange mode of catching deer.—Return to Bowani.—Finale 176

SECTION III.—THE MOUNTAIN RANGES.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NEILGHERRIES.

Pleasing recollections.—The deep forest described.—The pleasures and excitement of a hunter’s life.—The requisite qualifications.—The Neilgherries and their productions.—Variety of game.—Ootacamund.—Englishmen and their love of sport.—Dawson’s Hotel.—Burnside Cottage.—Mala-mund.—The Todas: their women, habitations, and strange customs.—News of elk.—The start: preliminaries.—The drive.—Game afoot.—A capital shot.—Three deer bite the dust, and Bruin yields up his spoils.—A stag at bay.—The return.—Convivial gathering.—The Major’s story 191

CHAPTER XIV.

ELEPHANT-HUNTING IN THE FOREST AROUND THE BASE OF THE NEILGHERRIES.

The elephant-hunter's qualifications, "Mighty Hunters."—The start.—The Coonoor Pass.—The trail.—Signs of a tusker.—The herd.—A bull-elephant dies.—A cow and calf fall.—The bivouac .. Page 209

CHAPTER XV.

THE NEILGHERRIES AND THE KOONDAHS.

News of a tiger.—His last depredation.—The ambuscade.—Lying in wait.—A night attack.—Exciting moments.—The spoiler vanquished.—The return.—News of ibex, and an expedition to the Koondah range.—The start.—Ibex stalking.—Description of the ibex of the Neilgherries.—The Kudiakad peak.—The mountain-side.—A quiet shot.—Out-manceuvring a sentinel.—Game on the ground.—A long shot.—Game recovered under difficulties 221

CHAPTER XVI.

THE KOONDAHS.

The Bowani river.—The Koondahs.—The charms of forest life.—The hunter's studies and recreations.—The instinct and character of animals.—A clever dog.—The language of animals.—The "voices of the forest."—Strange natural phenomena.—Evening in the forest.—The return to camp.—The Gooroo's news of game.—A fight between a full-grown tiger and a bull bison.—The game ended.—The field, the vanquished, and the victor.—Salt earth.—Excursion to the Ungindah peak, and a good day among the ibex 240

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SAD END OF A FAMOUS SHEKARRY.

An Indian spread.—Lieut. W——.—The dead charger.—News of elephant.—Arrangements and start.—A voyage in a strange craft.—Alligators.—The Mooyaar jungle.—The Muntjak.—The silent ap-

proach of deer.—The loris.—Native superstition.—The route.—A Mulcher village.—News of a rogue elephant.—The rencontre.—An awkward position.—The rogue's cunning.—The charge.—Life and death on the shot.—An unlooked-for coincidence.—The bivouac.—Evident traces of a comrade's handiwork.—The elephant his own doctor.—The bivouac.—The bullets recognised.—No fresh spoor to be found.—Return to camp.—Pot-hunting.—A blank hunt for spoor.—W——'s non-appearance.—Return to the hills.—Sad news.—The Mulcher's prophecy fulfilled.—Lieut. W——'s shocking death from an enraged wounded elephant Page 258

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ANAMALAI MOUNTAINS.—ELEPHANT HUNTING.

Coimbatore.—News of elephants.—A Poojah to propitiate the Hindoo deities meets with no satisfactory results.—A court-martial held on the recusant Sawmy.—Sentence and execution.—The ghost of the injured Sawmy appears to the Gooroo.—His threat.—The laying of the spirit.—Result obtained.—The start.—M——'s hut at Tunnacud-doo —His hospitality.—A bison wounded.—Taketty.—News of a herd of elephants.—Our bivouac.—A night alarm.—Elephants astir.—A bull-elephant yields up his spoils.—An immense snake caught.—We follow up the spoor of the herd.—Beautiful forest scenery.—Tracking by torchlight.—Difficulties surmounted.—We swim a nullah.—The trail.—The herd in view.—A bull-elephant anchored.—A second tusker wounded.—A charge.—A predicament.—A lucky shot decides the day.—The result of a pat from an elephant .. 281

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GREAT ANAMALAI FOREST.—TIGER HUNTING.

Our plan of operations.—The hunting-grounds.—Preparations.—The journey.—Jungle travelling.—Our bivouac.—A lonely glen.—Signs of game.—The ambushade.—Forest signs and jungle melody.—Googooloo gives tongue.—The spoiler spoiled.—An unexpected rencontre.—A wounded tigress.—Her retreat stormed.—Fatal accident.—Retribution.—The shekarry's grave 311

CHAPTER XX.

THE GREAT ANAMALAI FOREST—(*continued*).—BISON HUNTING.

Our hut.—A gigantic carp.—Fish shooting.—His dimensions.—Discovery of a cave; an exploring party.—The tiger's spoils.—His dimensions.—“Away with melancholy.”—Chineah's reconnaissance and bag.—Our open council.—Jungle harmony.—Our proceedings and plan for the morrow.—The turn-out.—The start.—A hard fag.—A fresh trail of bison struck.—Googooloo has the ear of a hare.—Two buck-elk and a hind bite the dust.—We follow up the bison's trail.—Heavy work.—Land-leeches.—The find.—A heavy bag and a good day's work.—The gigantic dimensions of the patriarch of the herd.—The game bushed.—Again *en route*.—A teak forest.—The head of the fall.—Magnificent views.—Our bivouac Page 336

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GREAT ANAMALAI FOREST—(*continued*).—A ROGUE ELEPHANT.

Naga's party join us.—News of a *rogue* elephant.—Chineah despatched for the bison's spoils.—B——'s luck.—The start.—We strike a fresh trail.—Fall in with the tusker.—Our proceedings.—B——'s excellent shot.—The *ivories*.—A discussion on “*rogues*.”—The cutting-out of the tusks.—Return to the low country.—Arrival of our guests.—Dinner.—B——'s adventure of a “griffin.”—The lion and tiger compared.—My first lion.—We again ascend the ghaut.—Good cheer.—Consultation.—Elephant spoors.—The trail followed up.—K——'s rashness.—An escape.—A small tusker falls.—Return to the hut.—B——'s bag.—A storm.—Return to cantonment 358

SECTION IV.—THE HIMALAYAS.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TERAI AND THE DEHRA DOON.

The Himalayas.—The nature of the forest, and the variety of game to be found at each elevation.—The great natural resources of the district.—Kheeree.—My first rencontre with Dr. S——.—The programme.—The Dehra Doon.—Glorious scenery.—Dehra and my reception.—Fred. G.——.—The preparation.—Our armament.—The start.—Kalunga.—Than.—News of game.—We strike the trail of a tiger.—My shekarries' superiority in tracking.—The spoiler disturbed at his dinner.—Our proceedings.—The kakur, or barking-deer.—The Doctor's doings.—A wounded tiger's trail followed up.—Unexpected rencontre.—The issue.—The spoilers spoiled.—Forest harmony.—The return to Than Page 379

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TERAI AND THE DEHRA DOON.—(continued.)

Camp struck.—Game *en route*.—The kaleege, or silver pheasant.—Indian partridges.—Our new bivouac.—A turn up in the woods.—The tiger-cat.—My dog Ponto ; his sagacity, courage, and wonderful instinct.—Our new bivouac.—Plans for the morrow.—A wild spot.—Game afoot.—A female panther wounded, and an unexpected rencontre.—Warm work satisfactorily concluded.—A cub caught.—More game.—We are early baulked of our pork-chops by another hunter.—Two of a trade never agree : exemplification of the proverb.—Return to camp.—Fred's native guest.—The Doctor falls in with spoor.—Pleasant evening.—The start.—Signs of game.—The trail.—A herd in view.—Plan of operations.—Good sport.—The novice's success.—Return to camp 398

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DEHRA DOON AND MUSSOORIE.

Doon shooting.—An Indian pic-nic.—The Dripping Well of Sansa-Dharna.—An impromptu bear-hunt.—Return to Dehra.—The Doctor discovers a strange peculiarity in the atmosphere of the hills.—Preparations for a trip.—Puharee coolies.—The start.—Mussoorie.—Himalayan game.—The snow bear.—Musk deer.—Gooral.—Surrow.—Ibex.—Burrul and Thaar.—Moonal.—Koklass.—Cheer.—Argus and snow pheasants.—Himalayan partridges Page 422

CHAPTER XXV.

THE VALLEY OF THE GANGES AND SACRED SHRINE OF GANGOUTRIE.

The route.—The Valley of the Ganges.—The Sacred River.—Snow streams.—Daily marches.—The Kanoolie Hills.—Gooral stalking.—Bear shooting.—Thaar stalking.—Successful work.—The Hunter's fire.—Difficult travelling.—Changes in the forest.—Wild scenery.—The Brahmin's retreat.—The Jad Gunga.—The Sacred shrine of Gungajee.—Gangoutrie.—Rudru Himaleh .. . 447

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SOURCE OF THE GANGES, AND THE GREAT GLACIERS OF RUDRU HIMALEH.

Early morning.—The start.—Musk-deer.—Wild scenery.—Difficult travelling.—Burrul shooting.—A snow-leopard killed.—More sport.—A grand view.—Rudru Himaleh.—Burrul stalking.—A snap-shot.—Game a-foot.—Successful work.—The bivouac.—The appearance of the great glacier from the valley.—The Cow's Mouth.—The source of the Ganges.—An adventure with snow bears.—Preparations for Glacier-land.—The appearance of the glacier.—Crevasses.—Obstacles in travelling.—Sunrise on the mountains.—The head of the glacier.—The chasm of the Ganges.—Ice caves.—A storm.—A dangerous position.—The shelter.—Avalanches and landslips.—Intense cold.—Our bivouac at a high altitude.—The return 468

CHAPTER XXVII.

THIBET AND CASHMERE.

Jumnautrie, the source of the Jumna, hot-springs.—The route over the Neila pass.—Ibex shooting in the Askrung valley.—The Parung pass.—The Choomarera lake.—The kyang or wild horse.—The Chushul valley.—Ovis Ammon.—The Kailas range.—Bunchowr shooting.—Ladak.—The Buddhist monastery of Hemis.—Praying machines.—The route to Cashmere.—Serinnugger.—The Shalimar gardens.—The lake.—Social gatherings.—Ferishta's description of earthly bliss.—Islamabad and the ruins of Martund.—The game of Cashmere.—Beautiful scene.—Short-sighted policy.—Kindred spirits.—The Triumvirate broken. Page 495

PART II.—CIRCASSIA.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Omer Pacha.—My followers.—Bashi-Bazouks.—Houssain the Arnout.—Ahmed the Koord.—Ali the Nubian.—Mahomed the Arab.—Sied Cassim the Dervish.—Abdulla the guide.—Captain Dymock's grave.—Godova.—Wild fowl.—A heavy bag.—The climate of Circassia.—The inhabitants: their manners, customs, and dress.—Circassian women.—The Illori chieftain.—The "Faithful" and the "forbidden indulgence."—Omer Pacha, a humbug.—His reputation amongst the Turkish officers.—His wound accounted for.—His acquisitiveness and plunder.—A fearful chase by wolves.—The Turkish Colonel's advice.—Sulleiman Pacha.—His purchase.—Revolt of the Harem.—The catastrophe and finale 513

CHAPTER XXIX.

CIRCASSIA—(*continued*).

Circassian scenery.—A false alarm.—The Bey's Konak.—Rifles and revolvers.—Circassian cuisine.—A goose cooked à la Mrs. Harris.—Uninvited company.—News of a bear.—A night prowler.—A huntsman's toilet.—The route through the ravines.—The lair.—The Bey's dogs give tongue.—An enormous bear wounded.—A man mauled.—The Bruin bites the dust.—The bivouac.—Horses stolen.—Mussulman apathy.—The pursuit.—The trail.—The plunderers surprised and taken.—Their punishment 535

CHAPTER XXX.

CIRCASSIA.—(*continued*).

On the sale of Circassian females, and extenuating circumstances.—
 Their character.—An exploring trip premeditated.—The start.—A
 Russian fort.—Bustard-shooting.—Forest scenery.—Difficulties *en*
route.—Trout-fishing.—Mosquitoes.—A lovely valley.—Wild-cattle
 hunt.—An awkward predicament.—A bull and cow slain.—Mode of
 preserving the flesh.—More game a-foot.—The ascent of the first
 range.—Mountain scenery.—Mount El-Bruz in the distance.—Diffi-
 cult travelling.—A bear started.—A long shot.—Strange feelings.—
 A frightful chasm, and exciting moment.—Journey along the ridge.
 —The descent.—Wolves.—A Circassian hamlet.—Hospitality.—A
 noble race.—A Durbar, and the result of our consultation.. Page 552

CHAPTER XXXI.

CIRCASSIA—(*continued*).—THE ASCENT OF MOUNT EL-BRUZ.

Forest scenery.—The first halt.—A glacier.—A beautiful panorama.—
 Sunrise.—A lammergeier slain.—Glacier travelling.—Eternal snow.—
 —Avalanches.—The lower summit attained.—Our exultation.—A
 description of the higher summit.—The impossibility of reaching
 it.—Grand scenery.—Intense glare.—The descent commenced.—A
 sudden death.—Kuchuc's last resting-place.—Fatiguing fag.—The
 bivouac in the pine-forest.—An ibex killed.—Return.—Finale .. 571

PART III.—FIRE-ARMS.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HINTS UPON FIRE-ARMS.

The contemplated change in military and naval weapons.—Brown Bess,
 the percussion musket, the Minié, the Enfield, and the breech-loader.
 —The necessity of keeping pace with the times.—On the conversion
 of Enfield rifles into breech-loaders.—Mr. Westley Richards' and
 Messrs. Terry and Calisher's systems of breech-loading arms.—Their

great advantages over all other systems as soldiers' arms.—On breech-loading arms for sporting purposes.—The opposition of “the old school” to the introduction of breech-loaders.—Thirty reasons for preferring breech-loading guns to ordinary muzzle-loaders.—Ancient prejudices against innovations.—Breech-loading rifles for sporting purposes.—Mr. Westley Richards' system of breech-loading rifles the best yet brought out for sporting purposes.—On different methods of rifling.—The Whitworth compared with the Enfield.—The Lancaster and Henry rifle.—Unscrupulous venders of arms.—Buying cheap guns a mistaken policy.—On the choice of a gun.—First-class guns compared with the inferior article.—The way to test the powers of a gun.—Correctness of shooting, penetration, and the distribution of the charge.—Requisites for brilliant shooting Page 587

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PRACTICAL HINTS ON THE USE OF THE RIFLE.

The theory of rifle-practice.—The rifle—the bullet—the line of fire—the trajectory—point blank range—the line of sight.—Sights.—Aiming drill.—Position drill.—Two steady positions for long-range practice.—Blank-cartridge firing. Judging distance drill.—Target practice.—Hints upon loading—allowances to be made for the wind, the state of the atmosphere, and the position of the sun.—Rules to be observed when firing at moving objects.—The best colour for a sportsman's dress.—A table showing the different visibility of colour 620

APPENDIX.

Directions for collecting and preserving specimens of natural history in tropical climates 639

Methods for obtaining the odours of plants 654

THE
HUNTING GROUNDS
OF THE
OLD WORLD.

THE DECCAN.

CHAPTER I.

“Magnificent creature! to reach thee I strain
Through forest and glen, over mountain and plain;
Yet now thou art fallen, thy fate I deplore,
And lament that the reign of thy greatness is o’er.

“Where now is that courage, late bounding so high,
That acuteness of scent, and that brilliance of eye;
That fleetness of foot, which, out-speeding the wind,
Hath so often left death and destruction behind?

“Thy heart’s blood is streaming, thy vigour gone by;
Thy fleet foot is palsied, and glazed is thine eye;—
The last hard convulsion of death has come o’er thee—
Magnificent creature! who would not deplore thee?”

HYDRABAD—MY FIRST DAY’S DEER STALKING.

Leave of absence obtained.—My Mentor.—Departure.—Abdulla-ben-Ali, the Killadar.—A Banian.—The hill-fort of Bhoonghir.—Old cannon.—Native hospitality.—Visions of deer.—The start.—Plenty of “slots” but no deer.—The Sambur described.—His habits.—A deer-stalker’s qualifications.—Hints.—The trail.—Walter’s companion.—Tracking.—The sambur’s instinct.—The bark of a buck elk.—The game in view.—An anxious moment.—My first stag.—Two harts die, a third hard hit.—The chase.—Ponto brings him to bay.—A good shot.—Return to camp.

TWENTY YEARS ago I was a jolly Sub. in a regiment forming part of the Hyderabad Subsidiary force, and

having got over the early troubles of my griffinage (*i. e.*, the goose step, adjutant's drill, &c.), in a weak moment after dinner I obtained three days' division leave from my colonel, who during the temporary absence of General A——n, was in command of the garrison, in order to accompany my great chum, Walter, in a sporting expedition to the Jaghir of the Killadar* of the hill-fort of Bhoonghir, which was about twenty miles from our cantonments.

Walter, who commanded the company to which I was attached, had been my Mentor in all duty matters from the day I first joined the regiment, and he now undertook to initiate me in the mysteries of "Shekar," in all its branches, a task which he of all others was well qualified to perform, being well known as the most fearless hunter and unerring shot in a country pre-eminent for the excellence of its sportsmen.

Years have rolled since poor Walter went to "that bourne from whence no traveller returns;" and the kindest heart that ever warmed human bosom has ceased to beat, for my friend sleeps his last under the shade of a giant forest tree, and his name is seldom called to mind, save when, at the close of day, his old comrades assemble round the social board and speak of "moving incidents by flood and field;" of hair-breadth "'scapes," of mighty feats and daring deeds, and an old hand pointing to some grim trophy of the chase hanging in the mess-room, will tell how the

* Killadar, the governor of a fort.

daring spirit that is gone plunged into some angry torrent, "and did buffet it with lusty sinews" after his quarry, bearded the tiger in his lair, and slew him single-handed, or saved a comrade from inevitable death by the fatal accuracy of his deadly aim.

He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

But to return to our subject. We left cantonment at the first indication of dawn, and, accompanied by all our people and baggage, which was furthermore escorted by a corporal and three sepoy, as the country was hardly deemed safe, on account of predatory bands of Rohillas and Puthans, we proceeded along the bank or embankment of the Hussain Sauger Tallow, an artificial lake which was upwards of thirty miles in circumference in the rainy season, and passing by the princely palace of the Resident of Hyderabad, we arrived at the bungalow of Captain Malcolm, the Assistant resident, with whom we breakfasted; and having rested a few hours, until the heat of the day was passed, we again set out, leaving the city of Hyderabad behind, crossing the Moosa river by a ford, and after a ride of three hours arrived at Shah-jehan-poor, where we remained for the night, and from which place the lofty hill-fort of Bhoonghir was pointed out to us, looming high above the surrounding hills.

At daybreak the next morning we were again in the saddle, and after a pleasant ride through low

jungle arrived at an immense banian tree (*Ficus Indica*), where we found Abdulla-ben Ali, the Killadar, and his son, waiting for us with "Saindee" (the sap of the date palm, which, when fresh, is a delightful beverage) and trays of fruits and sweetmeats of different kinds.

He offered us accommodation, for ourselves and followers, in the fort, but we preferred encamping under this magnificent banian tree, which in itself was quite a grove, being of amazing size. Contrary to most other vegetable productions, this tree seems to be exempted from decay; for every branch from the main body throws out its own roots, at first in small tender fibres several yards from the ground, which continually grow thicker, until by a gradual descent they reach its surface, where striking in they take root, and receiving nourishment from the earth, increase to large trunks, which themselves become parent trees, shooting forth other branches; thus continuing in a state of progression, independent of the first parent of them all. A banian tree, with its many trunks, forms the most beautiful walks, vistas, and cool recesses that can be imagined, for the leaves are large, soft, and of a lively green, and the grateful shade it affords is infinitely preferable to that of any building. The fruit is a small fig, which is of a bright scarlet colour when ripe, affording sustenance to monkeys and birds of various kinds, that dwell among the branches. We killed several dozen green pigeons, besides others of different kinds, the morning

of our arrival, but the next day they came just as numerous as ever.

Having seen that our tents were properly pitched and our horses firmly picketed, we accompanied the Killadar to his quarters in the fort, the ascent of which is very steep, and almost impracticable for horses, and he took us round the fortifications, which were tolerably strong for a native fort, consisting, as usual, of a loop-holed wall, with square bastions of masonry, and a kind of *fausse braie*, with a line of interior defences, which formed the citadel. He appeared to think the place impregnable, and neither Walter nor myself cared to undeceive him, although we both made up our minds that it would take our troops something less than an hour to get into it.

He showed us some curious old native guns, one of which was of very large calibre, being formed of bars of iron welded together and fastened with large iron hoops, and the shot, which were of stone, we found to be rather heavier than we could lift.

After our inspection we adjourned to the Killadar's house, which appeared to have been formerly the gateway of an old Hindoo temple, but all the images had been destroyed and replaced by stone slabs bearing Persian inscriptions. We were shown into the "dewan-khana," or guest-room, where a very nice dinner, in the native style, was served, and our host conversed with us whilst we partook of his hospitality, and appeared much amused at my awkward attempts

to convey the food to my mouth with my fingers, a feat which I was not then accustomed to perform, although it is the ordinary mode of eating among all classes and castes in India. I had my turn when he came to visit us, afterwards, and attempted to eat with a knife and fork for the first time.

After we had dined, sherbet and sweetmeats were handed round, with hubble-bubbles and hookahs (water-pipes), and the Killadar informed us that his shekarries* had not returned from the jungles, whither he had sent them to try and find out the whereabouts of a large tiger, who had been committing a good deal of depredation among the herds in the low country; but that if we would like a day's sambur² shooting, he would accompany us on the morrow, and show us a place where we should be nearly certain to find.

Of course we were agreeable, and after expending a good deal of breath in interchanging compliments, &c., we took our leave and returned to our tents, the Killadar having promised to be with us before day-break with masaltjies or torch-bearers, as it was some short distance to the jungle where we were to hunt, and early dawn was the best time to catch the deer feeding.

I had never killed a deer, or, indeed, any other large game (except a hyena, that ventured into my compound, or garden, one night, after my dogs, and which I managed to knock over with a charge of

* Shekarries, hunters.

† Sambur, elk (*Rusa Aristoteles*).

buck-shot), and consequently I was in too excited a state to rest much during the night; for visions of deer came and vanished amidst broken slumbers, and I awoke dreaming that after a long and weary chase over mountains, and across ravines, I came upon a monstrous stag, put up my rifle and pulled—but all in vain—it would not go off.

I had only just dropped into a refreshing sleep, when I was awakened by Walter beating the “British Grenadiers,” with his hair-brush on a huge brass basin, which was formed out of one of the gongs taken from the Pagoda at Rangoon. I sprang from my bed as if the deer were already before me, and donning my toggery, which was of moleskin of most approved colour and cut, buckled on my spurs and examined my rifles, whilst my servant poured out some hot coffee, flavoured with but just a “threatening of cognac,” and in a few minutes we were joined by the Killadar, his son, and three or four “juwans” (young men in attendance), and, mounting our horses, we wound round the scarped side of the hill-fort, and entered a long narrow defile between two hills, by a narrow path running along the banks of a mountain stream then nearly dry.

After a tedious ride of about two hours’ duration, by torchlight, the grey dawn broke over the mountain tops, and a gentle breeze arose, just moving with its refreshing breath the leaves of the loftier trees; now and then a hare or a covey of partridges sprang up on either side, and vanished amid the gloom of

the surrounding thickets, alarmed at the noise made by the feet of our horses over the rocky path.

At last the ravine opened into a beautiful glen, in which there were small patches of cultivation, and here the Killadar begged us to dismount and keep quiet, as the dun tenants of the waste were in the habit of quitting the dense jungle during the night, and browsing upon the young cholum (Indian corn) in the early morning. He sent two of his people that knew the ground, to reconnoitre, who, after a few minutes, came back with the information that they had seen a sounder of hog, but that there were no sambur on the ground, although there were several places covered over with fresh slots (the marks of a deer's tread), showing that they had been there during the night.

The Killadar gave vent to his disappointment by a volley of strange oaths, and was for returning home, but Walter begged him to remain and enjoy a quiet smoke under the shade of a tree, whilst we followed up tracks and attempted to stalk them. This he was delighted to do, as he did not like the thoughts of following up the game through the thick jungle, being a stout, thick-set, phlegmatic individual, hardly fit for such work.

Walter divested himself of his extraneous clothing, substituting a pair of thin elk-skin shoes for his ordinary riding-boots, and I followed his example; then unloosing the girths of our saddles, we gave strict injunctions to our people to remain quiet, and sallied

into the glen, accompanied by one of the men who had seen the fresh slots.

I have been so impatient to get on the trail, and plunge at once, as it were, *in medias res*, that I have omitted to describe the sambur. This species of deer, which is to be met with in almost all the large jungles throughout India, is considerably larger than the Scotch red deer, and cannot be mistaken for the same species. The horns are rather upright, having two short brow antlers *only*, and at three years old two points at the extremities of each beam; the eyes are large and very prominent; the ears rounded; the tail longer, and the arm more muscular than our red stags. The hair immediately next to the jaw is longer than any other part of the neck, and when he is alarmed or excited it stands on end, and forms a kind of ruff, sometimes called the mane. The colour varies slightly, but is usually of very dark slate, mingled with grey, nearly black about the face and points, and a light buff between the haunches and underneath. The female is much smaller than the male, and is of a lighter colour.

The horns vary in size, according to the age of the animal, and are cast annually, not, however, always at the same time, for one generally drops a day or two after the other. The new horns attain their full growth in about three months, appearing about a week after the old ones are shed, and are covered with a thick, leaden-coloured skin, called the velvet, which, after a time, begins to fall off. At this period

the horns are very sensitive, and the stags avoid bringing them into collision with any substance.

The period of gestation is eight months. The hind drops the fawn in some secluded and shady spot, making it lie down by pressing her nose and forehead against it, after which it will never stir until she comes again, for she leaves it until the close of day, remaining a short distance to windward, so as to be at hand in case it should be found out by foxes or jackals. The natives say, and I believe with some truth, that if you find a young fawn that has never followed its dam, take it up and breathe in its nostrils, allowing it to suck your fingers for a few moments, that it will follow you for miles, becoming instantly tame; but if it has once followed its dam, for ever so small a time before you found it, it will never follow a human being.

The female does not cohabit with the male until three years old, and never has more than one fawn at a time. During the rutting season, which period lasts about a week, the harts are extremely vicious, and may be heard roaring all over the forests, calling and answering each other. When they meet they engage in savage conflicts, rearing themselves on their hind legs, sparring with their fore-feet, and butting each other with their antlers, until one feels himself worsted, and leaves the herd; the hinds, who generally watch the engagement with the utmost nonchalance, bestowing their favours on the conqueror.

There is no animal more shy or solitary by nature than the sambur. He takes alarm from every living thing in the forest; the slightest sound, be it only the fall of a leaf or the scratching of a jungle fowl, will scare and set him off in a moment. Except in certain embarrassed situations, *they always run up wind*, their great security lying in their extreme keenness of scent, for they can smell a taint in the air at an almost incredible distance.

When a hart is disabled or run down by dogs, and he feels that he cannot escape by speed, he will choose the best position he can, and defend himself to the last extremity with his antlers. Powerful dogs may pull down a full-grown stag when running and breathless, but not a *cold hart* (one that has not been wounded) when he stands at bay, for he takes such a sweep with his antlers that he could exterminate a whole pack, should they attack in front only.

The sambur, like many other animals, seems to foresee every change of weather, for they leave the hills and descend into the plains whenever any rough weather is about to take place.

The deer-stalker should not only be able to run like an antelope, but he should possess the bottom of an Arab horse, to enable him to keep the game in view; he should be able to creep like a leopard, and to run with his back bent almost double, and at a pinch to wriggle himself along the ground, *ventre à terre*, like an eel. He should be able to wade or swim torrents, to keep his footing on slippery water -

trail, the slots not being more than an hour old. I remember being much struck with the extraordinary facility he had in discerning the trail over the most difficult ground; the slightest mark, an upturned stone, a bruised leaf, or a bent twig, being sufficient to indicate the route pursued by the game with the greatest certainty.

The gift of *tracking* or *following up spoor*, appears to be innate, or a kind of instinct, in the red men of the "Far West," and to certain jungle tribes of Hindostan; but it takes careful study, great observation, and long experience, before "dwellers of cities" are able to mark and understand *forest signs* with any certainty.

We found the elk had left the cholum fields and made for a steep ravine, at the bottom of which wound a mountain torrent, sometimes creeping silently among mossy stones, and at others dashing down over huge boulders of greenish granite, with a roar like distant thunder.

"The deer evidently know this ground well, Hal," exclaimed Walter, breaking silence after an hour's heavy pull up and down hill, "for see, they have gone up stream to find a more convenient ford, as the current here is so strong that the fawns not being able to keep their legs, would have been swept away in crossing; so, if you are not out of breath, we will after them at once, as the quicker we get over the ground, the less will we have to cover, provided we go about it quietly and cautiously."

On we went, sometimes on our hands and knees,

creeping through dense underwood, and at others climbing rocks or wading watercourses, until we came to a place where the stream was shallow, and here it was evident that the deer had crossed very lately, as water was still flowing into the deep imprints made by their feet in the soft sands near the banks.

“Take care not to make any splash as you go over, and tread carefully, Hal,” whispered Walter; “the trail is warm, and the herd cannot be far off, for the slots indicate they have been going slowly, browsing as they went, so they cannot have taken alarm.” “Go ahead,” I replied, feeling, I must own, rather nervous and excited, as who would not be, when after his first stag; and on we went, creeping along with the utmost caution for a quarter of an hour, when suddenly we heard a sharp noise, like the barking of a dog, which seemed to come from a dense thicket some short distance in our front.

Walter pulled up at once, and I noticed Ponto, his canine friend, had also caught up the sound, for he had his head knowingly cocked on one side, and his nose elevated, as if he was listening carefully, and trying to sniff the air, whilst a small stump—an apology for a tail—made sundry eccentric movements, indicating that something was in the wind.

After a moment's pause, Walter touched my shoulder, and whispered below his breath, “That was the bark of a buck elk, so cock your rifle and step in front, as I want you to kill him; he cannot be far off, there-

fore keep a bright look-out, and be very careful not to make the slightest noise."

I stole noiselessly along the run, following the slots, which were distinctly visible, until I came to a more open spot, where the jungle had been burnt the preceding year, and, crouching behind a thick bush, I had the extreme satisfaction of seeing the herd, consisting of three harts and fourteen or fifteen hinds, some of which had fawns at heel, quietly cropping the herbage about two hundred yards distant.

It was a glorious sight, and I felt my heart thump against my ribs as I gazed for some seconds, too full of admiration to think of firing, when Walter touched my shoulder, whispered, "They are too far off to make certain, so try and crawl under cover of the bushes to that thick clump, and you will get an easy shot. If you go carefully you will not be discovered, as the wind blows strong from them to us, and I will follow when I see you safely posted."

I did as he desired, and we were now about a hundred and twenty yards distant from the herd, which, still unaware of our presence, continued browsing on the young wood and tender shoots.

This was the anxious moment—everything hitherto had succeeded; much time had been spent in tracking; the game was before us; and all now depended on a steady hand. "Take the nearest, Hal," whispered Walter, and leave the further one to me—fire when I whistle. Are you ready?"

I had covered the shoulder of a stately stag, with

towering antlers and a large black ruff round his neck, and on the signal being given, let drive. He made a bound, staggered, then fell forward, and was instantly dead.

Walter, who had a very much longer shot, brought another fine hart to the ground, hitting him through the hind-quarters, and paralyzing them, and, as the herd rushed by, wounded another as it sprang from an adjoining thicket, where it must have been lying down unobserved. I heard the "thud" as the ball struck against his dun side, and, jumping on a rock close by, let fly with my second barrel, but the shot was too high, it only cracked against his horns and stunned him for a moment, for he soon recovered and went off with the rest, seemingly as well as ever. "A splendid shot, by Jupiter!" exclaimed Walter, "for he was a good three hundred yards when you fired, but you were not quick enough, and as it has failed to stop him, we will first 'pay the last offices to the fallen,' and then send Ponto on his track, for I feel sure he is hard hit, and if we do not urge him whilst the wound is fresh, but give it time to stiffen, he will be obliged to slacken his pace and fall out from the rest of the herd."

Walter had shot his stag through the small of the back, and although completely disabled, so as not to be able to drag itself along, it was not dead, and it was with some difficulty that he managed, with Ponto's assistance, to plunge his long knife in his chest and finish him. After we had bled, opened,

and "gralloched" both, we covered the carcasses over with thorny bushes and stones, to preserve them from the vultures, without which precaution we should only have found the bones when we returned with the coolies to carry away the game; and having refreshed the inner man with a nip of "brandy panee," we reloaded our rifles and tracked up the hart Walter had wounded, which, from the size of the slots, appeared to be larger than either of those we had killed.

Here and there we found the ground dyed with drops of blood, and where he rolled over when my bullet struck his horn there was a bright crimson pool, which showed that he was hard hit. "He cannot travel far, Hal, in that state," said Walter, "so we will set the dog after him, and I do not doubt but that he will soon bring him to bay. Hey, Ponto! fetch him, boy." The intelligent animal looked up in his master's face, as if he could there read what was required of him, then made a cast with his nose along the ground, until he got scent of the wounded deer, when off he set at speed.

We followed at our best pace, and, after a sharp run, had the gratification of hearing Ponto's deep tongue echoing among the rocks. "Bravo, my dog!" cried Walter; "keep up, Hal, for five minutes longer, for by that cry I know the stag is at bay." We tore down the slope of the hill leading to the river, and there he was, standing in the torrent, every now and then menacing Ponto with his antlers, who was

swimming in the stream, and had enough to do to evade his frantic rushes.

I was quite out of breath and powerless with the run, but Walter, standing up, at once firm and collected, took a deliberate aim with his unerring rifle; an echo was heard rumbling among the rocks, and the stag, taking a mighty spring, plunged into the stream, shot through the brain, and rose a lifeless thing.

The current, which was extremely rapid, bore the carcass down for some distance, dashing it amongst the rocks and whirling it in the eddies, and we had considerable difficulty in getting down to drag it out, as the ravine was very steep and full of precipices and huge rocks. At last we managed to haul him high and dry on the bank, and having gralloched and covered him over with branches and stones, we set off for the spot where we had left the Killadar some five or six hours before. Just awakened from sleep, he had no idea that we had been away so long, and fancied we were joking when we told him of our sport.

He sent his people, guided by Ponto, to sling the venison on poles and bring it in, and "there was a sound of revelry by night" in his little fortress, for after sending a couple of haunches into cantonment, we divided the rest among his followers. I turned in that night very tired, and considerably bruised with sundry falls, but delighted with the success of my first day's deer-stalking.

On the following morning the Killadar got us up a beat in the ravine where a tiger had been seen some days previously, but it proved a "blank;" and the day after, "our leave being up," we had to bid adieu to our native friends and return to cantonment.

CHAPTER II.

“Oh sages! think on joy like this,
And where’s your boasted apathy?”

HOG-HUNTING.

The fortress of Golconda.—The Tombs of the Kings.—The gardens.—Persian inscriptions.—The gathering.—Plan of operations.—Reminiscences of the past.—The start.—The rendezvous.—My nag Lal Babba.—A moment of suspense.—The find.—We’re away.—The chase.—The first blood.—A purl.—The advantages of being on good terms with one’s nag.—The tug of war.—Exciting moments.—The struggle for the spear.—It is won.—The charge.—Mischievous ensues.—The death of the boar.—The wounded hog-hunter.—The death of an old friend.—The trysting-tree.—The trophies.—The return to cantonment.

It was evening; the oppressive glare and overpowering heat of the day were gone, and the sun was setting with that gorgeous magnificence which is rarely to be seen except in “land of the cedar and vine.” His last expiring rays tinged the whole of the heavens, from the western horizon to the zenith, with indescribably beautiful gold and crimson hues, and striking upon the numerous gilt pinnacles of the mosques and minarets which rose above the castellated walls of the hill-fort of Golconda, formed a contrast with the deep verdure of the mango groves and the lighter foliage of the graceful tamarind, on which the eye rested with delight.

On the one hand lay Golconda, with its lofty rock-

built citadel, bastioned walls, and loopholed battlements: and on the other rose those magnificent structures of ancient days, the tombs of the kings, with their massive domes, gigantic cupolas, towering minarets, and stately piazzas.

Many changes have taken place since the last of the Kootub Shawee dynasty was placed in his regal sepulchre. His kingdom has passed away into the hands of strangers, and his very name is now forgotten in the land where he was once pre-eminent; still, these time-worn but stately monuments will attest to many succeeding generations the splendour and magnificence of the ancient rulers of Hindostan.

No such works are carried on in the present day; and what makes these buildings more remarkable is, that the immense blocks of granite with which they are constructed have had to be transported from long distances, none being procurable in the immediate vicinity. The stupendous domes of these royal mausoleums were formerly ornamented with inlaid enamel of different colours, forming beautiful arabesques; but time, aided by the depredations of the ignorant, has succeeded in obliterating a great part, and it is only in the more sheltered and out-of-the-way places that this beautiful enamel can be seen in the same freshness of colour as it exhibited when first laid on. The wilful damage these relics of the past have sustained is the more to be regretted, as the very art of making this beautiful enamel has been forgotten. The grey granite walls in the interior

are beautifully carved, and in some places the doorways and ornamented niches are of highly-polished black granite.

The largest of the tombs will contain about 8,000 people, it being built in the shape of a square, having a veranda with forty-eight arches all round. Some of the pillars are carved out of single blocks of granite ; and I noticed slabs with which the interior is paved upwards of sixty feet in length. Under the centre of the dome is the tomb itself, hewn out of a solid piece of black granite, highly polished as the finest marble, and covered with beautifully carved arabesques, Persian inscriptions, and verses from the Koran.

At each corner of the building is a small archway, and a circular staircase in the thickness of the wall, leading to the tops of the minarets, from the upper galleries of which the Muezzins used to call "the faithful" to prayer at five certain times during the day. In capacious vaults below are the tombs of the wives, favourite mistresses, and children of the kings, also of black, polished marble, covered with inscriptions. Besides the seven large tombs there are several smaller ones, also numerous Mosques, Eedgahs, Shrines, Tanks, Baths, Durm-salahs (alms-houses), Caravanserais, and Choultrees, for the accommodation of pilgrims and travellers, which are falling to ruin from neglect.

There is a very tolerably kept-up garden round one of the tombs, in which the mango, orange, lime,

citron, pumelow, fig, jack-fruit, pomegranate, plantain, cocoa-nut, vine, and betel-nut palm flourish. It is a delightful place, and quite in the Oriental style, having long shaded avenues, with stone borders, numerous fountains, and streams of running water on each side, to irrigate the plants. Parterres of roses and Indian jessamine load the air with the most delicious fragrance, and at intervals are beautiful "*kiosks*" or garden-houses, of the most elaborate and delicately carved Saracenic architecture, profusely ornamented with arabesques and quaint Arabic and Persian inscriptions, some of which I took the trouble of deciphering, and found them to be guzzels, or verses, in which some fair beauty is described "*as having dark, almond-shaped eyes, in which the purity of her heart was reflected : but which committed more destruction among the hearts of men than the double-edged sword of Rustum; whose voice was like the evening song of the Bul-bul, mingled with the distant murmuring of many waters; whose beauty made the rose turn pale with envy, and the passion-flower drop to the ground from jealousy; whose gait was graceful as that of the silver moon sailing through the firmament; whose lips were more delicious to taste than the rosy wine of Sheras : whose smile gladdened the heart of all beholders, which became water in the presence of the lovely one.*" Numerous fountains to cool the air, and places for streams of running water, encircled many of these retreats; but the former would not play, and the latter were choked up, from neglect, and falling into ruin.

The large tomb was appointed the rendezvous for a party of hog-hunters, of which I formed one ; and the number of cots stowed away in the numerous recesses round the interior of the building, showed that the "meet" would be well attended. Almost under the centre of the cupola, numerous gaily dressed attendants were engaged in laying out a table for dinner, and in the veranda, knots of Anglo-Indian officers, of all ranks, were sitting, with their feet resting against the stone pillars, or on tables, enjoying the comparative coolness of the evening breeze. A light and airy costume, consisting of silk long drawers, shirt-sleeves, and slippers, was the order of the day ; some of the dandies amongst us indulging their *penchant* by "coming out" in gorgeous smoking caps, fancy muslin shirts, gold or silver kinkob pajamas (loose drawers), and embroidered papouches (slippers).

We were a motley gathering of all arms. There were Light Cavalry and Light Bobs, Queen's and Company's, Regulars and Irregulars, old weather-beaten veterans, bearded like the Druids of old, who had passed a quarter of a century in the country ; and smooth-faced youngsters, who had not yet passed the first year of their *griffinage* ; yet all were in the same state of excitement at the thoughts of the morrow's sport.

As we sat, waiting until dinner was announced, enjoying the murmuring, gurgling melody of our hookahs, or the fragrant weed in the shape of a

Manilla or Trichinopoly cheroot, N——, who was the originator of the expedition, proceeded to unfold the programme of the morrow's sport.

We were to partake of an early breakfast at three A.M., and mounting our hacks, were to proceed to the scene of action, near Raneepet, a village about twelve miles distant, where our tents and best cross-country horses had been despatched the day previous. Our shekarries and beaters had marked down several sounders (herds) of hog in a long strip of low jungle, contiguous to some tolerable riding ground, and had formed a chain, so as to prevent them making their way back into the denser cover.

As the moon was nearly at the full, and the distance but short, beating was to commence at daylight, and first-rate sport was anticipated, for we had some old hands amongst us—such as D——, S——, N——, C——, and O——, who were well known as the best spears and the boldest riders in the Deccan, where hog-hunting, ever the favourite sport, was carried on in the greatest perfection, so that the first sportsmen of India came from far-off stations to display their skill, and the goodness and courage of their cattle, at these meetings.

As it became dusk, some one sounded the dinner-call on a key-bugle, which had a very fine effect, as the sound was echoed in the dome several times, and also among the other tombs. We sat down nearly thirty to table; and after the clattering of knives and forks, and the popping of corks, had subsided, we

withdrew to one of the kiosks or pleasure-houses in the garden, where songs and brandy panee* passed round freely until a late hour.

Since that night many long years have glided on, and I have wandered over half the globe ; still, when I hear those old, familiar airs, the scene often comes before my eyes, and I think I see the well-remembered features of my old associates, in the forest and the field, who used to sing them, although I know that many sleep beneath the sod, having fallen on the field, or been cut off by pestilence in the flower of their years, and the few survivors are scattered, and I have lost sight of most of them. India is not, *perhaps*, a land to live in from choice, still my heart clings to it with a kind of unhallowed love ; for it ever appeared to me to possess a peculiarly fascinating charm, which I have found wanting elsewhere. Memory takes me back to those happy days I passed in that glorious land ; and as I look around my boyhood's home, in my native land (which to me long absence has given a novel freshness), and see the trophies of many a hard-fought field, and the spoils of my rifle and the spear hanging against the wall, I often think with affectionate regret of my old companions, and dream of the land

Where the maidens are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine.

In the morning, at the time appointed, a bugle again rang through the place, and we were soon

* Brandy and water.

round the breakfast-table, equipped in leathers and boots. Some of the old hands had also *sambur* (elk) skin jackets, and all wore hunting-caps. We were soon in the saddle, and after a couple of hours' canter by the light of the moon, arrived at our tents, which were pitched under a stately banian, under whose widely spreading arms some sixty Arabs were picketed, each being groomed by his respective syce (horsekeeper).

Coffee, brandy and soda-water, and cheroots, &c., were handed round, and half-an-hour was allowed for the saddling, when a messenger came from the head man of the village (who was with the beaters) to say that the hogs were undisturbed, and that all was in readiness.

The tree under which our encampment was pitched must have been of great age, for underneath were the ruins of a small Hindu temple, which bore traces of great antiquity. Some of the shoots of the trunk had insinuated themselves amid the masonry, and appeared to grow out of the roof.

The scene around was very picturesque; craggy hills were towering above the sea of forest in every direction, and a beautiful lake lay between us and the village, on which water-fowl of different kinds were distinctly heard. Partridges were calling all around as we mounted, and the first streaks of dawn were visible in the east.

I was mounted on a very favourite chestnut Arab, called Lall Babba (Lall signifies red, and Babba is a

term of endearment, generally used towards children), full of fire, and who seemed to be as eager for the sport as any of us. He was of a very high caste, of great courage, yet exceedingly docile, having a good mouth—an essential quality in a hog-hunter, and a famous cross-country horse, although small, not being over fourteen hands two inches; but extremely active, very swift, and of great endurance, and I felt, as he bounded under me, that he was in first-rate working condition, and would not disgrace me.

We cantered out to the scene of action, which was about half-a-mile from our tents, mustering twenty-seven well-mounted horsemen, and as soon as we had all taken post, two and two, some short distance from each other, like videttes, in the dry bed of a nullah, or watercourse, the banks of which hid us from view, the signal was given, and the beat commenced.

We waited some twenty minutes without being able to distinguish anything, although we heard the distant sounds of tomtoms (a kind of drum), and cholera horns (a huge brass trumpet shaped like the letter S).

After some time we began to discover, here and there, a long line of men slowly advancing through the bushes, and when they got near enough for us to distinguish their turbans and black faces, the yells and ferocious shouts, together with the wild flourishes of the cholera horn, the rolling of tomtoms, and the constant discharge of matchlocks and rockets, made

them appear like some wild horde advancing to attack us, with some slight show of discipline.

As they closed upon us the din became horrid, and their screams and yells were more discordant than ever, when suddenly loud cries were heard along the line of "Soor! soor! (hog! hog!) Kalee janwar!" (black beasts) and each horseman stood up in his stirrups and strained his eyes to ascertain which way the game had broken. It was an anxious moment, and intense excitement was depicted on every face, as we waited impatiently in our hiding-place for the signal bugle which was to announce the start.

At last the long-wished-for note rang forth; each horseman grasped his spear, crushed his hunting-cap firmly on his head, dug in his spurs, and sprang from his cover at speed upon the plain. A sounder of seven hogs were seen scouring over the ground at a tolerable pace, some four hundred yards from the cover from which they had broken.

As soon as they heard the tramp of our horses approaching, they increased their speed, and a huge grey boar fell back to the rear, champing his tusches and tearing up the ground in a most threatening manner. As our object was to force them further into the plain, so as to cut them off and prevent their returning into the jungle, we rode slowly for the first quarter of a mile, then our pace increased, and we went fairly in at them. When we approached they separated, and some of the youngsters of our party made after four sows which kept off to our left.

Although the pace was now becoming severe for some time, we appeared to gain but little on the boar, who, with a couple of sows, dashed away in a gallant style, clearing *en route* a nullah (water-course), which brought many of the field to a check.

Lall Babba was doing his work well, although he had become so excited with the chase that I had some little trouble in keeping him in hand. We cleared a yawning chasm which, though not more than nine feet wide, was difficult, as the opposite bank was two feet higher than the near one. Hearing a burst of laughter behind from O——, I turned my head, and saw five or six of our number rolling in the dust, and one seemed *hors de combat*.

Still on we tore, the field becoming more select, not numbering more than a baker's dozen. We now had a good burst, and one of the sows lagging behind, bit the dust, after having twice charged in a most gallant manner. N—— claimed the first blood of the day.

The pace was now becoming tremendous, and the second sow was rolled over by S——, O——, and D——, whose spears were applied several times before we heard the final squeal (the signal of dissolution).

I kept steadily after the boar, and by this diversion gained a couple of lengths ahead, when my horse put his foot on the loose stump of a tree and rolled over, giving me a *header* which made me see a considerable number of stars, and left me rather confused for a

moment. On swept the field, which I could see was "tailing off" very considerably; and after I had ascertained that no bones were broken, and Lall Babba had given himself a shake, I sprang into the saddle again, and was once more *en route*.

I was very much thrown out by this spill, and had lost ground, but, as luck would have it, the hog made for a deep ravine, having a drop of more than a dozen feet, which brought our field to a check. The boar managed to scramble down, and running along the bottom of the nullah for some distance, climbed up the opposite bank.

After riding some distance along the edge of the chasm, which was overgrown in places by stunted bush, I found a place which was a little more practicable, though the drop was still about eight feet deep, and the slope of the bank very steep. One more chance, thought I, springing from my horse, taking off the saddle and tying up the bridle—Lall Babba and I were old friends, and he would follow me like a dog—I threw the saddle into the bed of the nullah, and scrambled down afterwards myself. I then called him by name several times, and he came trotting along the bank as if he was seeking a more suitable place to descend. He then returned to that part of the bank down which I had scrambled, and stood pawing the edge hesitatingly. I again called him, and pretended to turn away down the bed of the nullah, when I shall never forget his appearance as he stood cocking his ears and laying his head on one

side, as he watched my motions with evident distress. He remained motionless a moment, as if he was considering what was to be done, then gave a loud whinny, sprang, and in a moment was rubbing his nose against my shoulder.

I patted him on the shoulder, and talked to him as I adjusted the saddle, and from his intelligent looks one would have thought he understood every word I said. I then walked along the bed of the nullah for some little distance, and we managed to scramble up the opposite bank, at a place which was not so steep.

I then looked around for the hog, and at length discovered him jogging along at a very easy pace, about a quarter of a mile off, in the plain. I made after him, having first dipped my pocket-handkerchief in a pool of the nullah, washed the dust from the mouth and nose of Lall Babba, and given him a mouthful of water in my hunting-cap to refresh him; and, in a short time, found myself within fifty yards of the boar, who evidently exhibited signs of distress, for he reeled from side to side, as he ran with his head strained forward, and his flanks heaved and were covered with foam.

I was now joined by N——, O——, S——, D——, C——, and W——, who came up with their horses nearly “pumped,” as they had had to ride nearly a mile down the nullah before they could find a place to cross.

We were perceptibly gaining upon our prey, when, with a burst of recovered speed, he swerved

off to the left, and in a moment I saw amid a few bushes a break in the ground, about a hundred yards in advance. I knew another "yawner" was ahead, and took a pull of my horse, so as to get him more in hand, and gather him together for the leap. This let N—— and C—— get a couple of lengths ahead, and S—— and T—— were neck and neck, closely followed by O——, D——, and W——.

The hog cleared a deep chasm like a bird, and we all followed except W——, whose horse fell on landing, giving him a heavy fall, and rolling over him. The ground now became firmer, the pace was terrific; and now came the tug of war for the honour of the spear—suddenly the hog, which was not more than a dozen horses' lengths in advance, disappeared. "What's that?" cried some one behind. "God knows," cried N——, ramming his hunting-cap down over his eyes, and in another moment we had leaped the steep bank of a nullāh (a perpendicular drop of about seven feet), and were floundering in sand and water.

D—— got an ugly fall, his horse rolling over him, and putting him *hors de combat*; S—— also found his horse sprained in the stifle, and he had also to pull up. N——, C——, O——, and myself, managed to scramble up the opposite bank, and were once more on *terra firma*.

The pace was very severe, and began to tell; and although Lall Babba appeared less distressed than the other horses, I knew he could not last much

longer. Still, on we went. I was neck and neck with N——, and C—— and O—— were close behind. We were evidently fast closing with the hog, when we came to another yawning chasm, of which he made "*an in and out.*" "Never say die," cried N——, and over it we both flew, landing safely on the other side (it was a good thirteen feet from bank to bank). O——'s horse fell with him, and C——'s was fairly done up to a stand-still, so we left them both behind.

The game now lay between N—— and myself. He rode a splendid large-made Arab, of high caste, called Bidgeley (lightning), well known throughout the Deccan as a hog-hunter. My horse was smaller, but I had the advantage in weight of at least a stone, besides which, Lall Babba had been spared the long run down the banks of the ravine, and had not had the lost ground to make up, which told severely on the other horses.

We were now upon a bit of very fair riding-ground, and the boar was not more than a couple of spear-lengths ahead. The pace was too good to last long, and I could see it was telling severely on N——'s horse, who was doing all he knew to keep him together. We were neck and neck, and now came the "struggle" for the spear. N—— made a vigorous attempt to hustle his horse, but without avail. Sitting steadily in my saddle, I gained the lead and kept it easily, Lall Babba following every twist and turn of the boar, like a greyhound after a hare.

The tusker, now evidently nearly done, was slackening his pace, and reeling from side to side as he ran. Another moment, and the point of my spear was among his bristles—a touch of the heel—a lift of the bridle—a Chiffney rush—and the victory was won. The blade of my spear was planted deeply into his loins.

With a ferocious grunt, a rolling of the eyes which portended mischief, and a champing of his tusches, he turned short round and charged. I wheeled Lall Babba round on his haunches, just in time to evade his frantic rush; he passed me like a shot on the near side, and attacked N——, who, a couple of lengths behind, received the charge on the point of his spear—I saw the bamboo shaft bend like a wand, and then fly high up into the air; another second—I heard a crash, and horse and man were rolling in the dust.

In the twinkling of an eye I was alongside the infuriated animal, who was indulging in a series of grunts of defiance, preparatory to another charge, and, watching my opportunity, I buried the blade of my spear behind the shoulder blade, and drove it out of his breast. He uttered a faint squeal (the note of departing life), gave a sudden twist (his expiring effort), which wrenched the spear from my hand, struggled a few paces further, fell, and bit the dust, dying game to the last.

I dismounted, and drew my hunting-knife across his throat, to let out the blood, loosened the girths of

my saddle, and then went back to see what had become of N——.

I found him sitting on the ground, with his face buried in his hands, in great distress, for his horse was struggling in the agonies of death a few paces from him. The boar, in charging, had ripped up his belly, his tusches cutting like a knife, and the intestines, also much injured, were protruding from the wound. I saw at a glance that it was a hopeless case, and tapping N—— on the shoulder, I gave a significant look to a small pistol that I always carried loaded in my belt on such occasions, in case of accidents.

He understood what was passing in my mind, walked up to his dying *serviteur*, and patted his neck. The poor animal, in spite of his agony, recognised his master, for he raised himself up partly from the ground, and rubbed his nose against his shoulder in a most affectionate manner. N—— kissed his forehead, and, passing his hand across his eyes, rushed into the jungle, saying, "Do not let him linger." When his back was turned, I placed the muzzle of my pistol to the suffering animal's temple, and pulled the trigger—a slight quiver of the body followed the report, and "Bidgeley" was dead. N—— cut off some of the hair of his forelock and tail for a *souvenir*, I slung his saddle and bridle over Lall Babba's back, and we slowly retraced our way towards the tents.

We soon fell in with O—— and C——, who were

reclining under a tree, as their horses were quite done up; and in a short time our syces (grooms) came up with fresh mounts. After having directed them where to find the hog, we mounted and rode into camp—a distance of eight miles; the boar having led us a chase of at least seven.

We had a fearfully hot ride, as the sun had risen high above the horizon, and there was not a cloud to intercept his rays; the sultriness was getting more and more oppressive, and we found the wind scorching. To add to our distress, every now and then a “pishash,” or whirlwind of dust, came twirling amongst us, filling our eyes and mouths.

At last, as our encampment came in view, we could distinguish six hogs hanging to our trysting-tree; and shortly afterwards the boar was hoisted up alongside of them. He was a huge brute, measuring thirty-eight inches in height at the shoulder, and his tusches were nearly nine inches in length.

We sat down to a substantial breakfast (pork chops forming one of the items), and in the cool of the evening we returned to cantonment, some of us with aching bones and curious bumps on the cranium, which would have puzzled Gall or Spurzheim; others with stripes of diachylon plaster on the face; and all of us with cracked lips and sunburnt faces. Our horses, too, showed their work, and “our gayness and our gilt were all besmirched.” Still every one was content with the sport, and the incidents of the day

afforded us ample topics of conversation when we met at mess, when N—— was heard consoling himself for his loss by observing, that Bidgeley had died as his master hoped to do—“*on the field in the moment of victory.*”

CHAPTER III.

“ Here couched the panting tiger on the watch ;
 Impatient but unmoved, his fire-ball eyes
 Made horrid twilight in the sunless jungle,
 Till on the heedless buffalo he sprang,
 Dragged the low bellowing monster to his lair,
 Crashed through his ribs into his heart—
 Quaffed the hot blood, and gorged the quivering flesh,
 Till drunk he lay, as powerless as the carcass.”

MULKAPOOR.

Our camp.—Mulka-poor.—The Patel.—Good news of shekar.—W——’s family.—Scheme for a Nautch.—The Begum.—Her love of good liquor.—The prescription.—Chineah and my shekar gang.—The doctor’s ruse.—News of a man-eater.—Departure of the gang.

It was a fine morning, soon after sunrise, in the month of March, when I arrived at the little village of Mulka-poor, two days’ march from Hyderabad, in the Deccan, in command of some irregular cavalry, which, with two companies of native infantry, formed the travelling escort of a begum (a lady of rank) and her daughter, who, with a large suite of followers and attendants of both sexes, was *en route* for the Presidency. The cavalcade consisted of numerous elephants, camels, palanquins, tonjons, hackeries, and vehicles of every description and colour, accompanied by a large body of gaudily dressed mounted attendants.



THE DEATH OF THE MAN-EATER.

THE DEATH OF THE MAN-EATER.

The principal personages occupied the public bungalow, round which high canvas walls had been placed, and sentries posted, so as to prevent intrusion, and render it entirely private; besides which numerous black eunuchs guarded the fold, and seemed to take a jealous care "that none should pierce the secret bower, but those who watch the women's tower."

The troops and camp followers halted on the open ground in front of the traveller's bungalow, and in a few short moments tents of every description uprose as if by magic; elephants, camels, and horses were eating quietly at their pickets; and in less time than it takes me to write, this little clearing from the surrounding jungle was converted into a busy camp.

The scenery about Mulkapoor is very wild and beautiful. On all sides are ranges of hills, some covered with luxuriant jungle, others presenting bold scarped rocks and naked fantastic peaks, whilst in every direction from amongst the dense foliage noble forest trees towered like giants above the lower waving jungle.

The scene in camp, though of every-day occurrence in India, would appear curious enough to a stranger, and merits description, for the noise of the trumpeting of elephants, the jingling of the camels' bells, the neighing of horses, the lowing of carriage bullocks, the bargaining of sepoy and camp followers with the bazaar men, was only heightened by the chase of a stray capon, whose errant ways were

calling forth the indignation of my maity (cook) "Five minutes" (a cognomen he had acquired from the invariable answer he gave when anything was wanted), who, joined by half a dozen sepoy, was shying his slippers at this victim devoted to "sudden death" for our breakfast, and venting their spleen by abusing its female relations up to the tenth generation. Three English officers belonging to the detachment of infantry, and a Scotch doctor, who had medical charge of the party, had taken refuge under a large tamarind tree from the rays of the sun, that was rising high on a sky which had not a cloud upon it to intercept his beams, and were discussing brandy panee, tea, and manilla cheroots, waiting until their tents were properly established.

As I joined the group, the old Patel, or head man of the village, came up, and having presented the customary lime, performed a series of low salaams to each of the party. He then drew up his hands together in token of respect, and begged us to excuse his not having made more preparations for our reception, stating "that he had only received intimation of our coming the day before, and that, on account of this short notice, he had become "*lachar*" (desperately miserable) when he thought that, perhaps, we might want something that he had not had time to provide.

As the old man had provided plenty of "gram" (beans) and forage for our horses, with a fine table sheep and fat fowls for ourselves, we declared our-

selves satisfied, upon which his face brightened up, and stroking down his long grey beard, he exclaimed several times, in a very complaisant manner, "Allah talah!" "Al-humda lillah!" (thank God! God be praised!).

"I should much like to halt a few days here," said Mac, the senior subaltern, addressing Captain W——, who commanded the infantry detachment, "for there must be plenty of shooting in those dense ravines."

"Yes," answered W——, "it looks quite 'a tigerish spot.' What say you, old man? Have you not plenty of 'shekar'* here?" continued he, addressing the Patel.

"Yes, Sahib," answered he, "there is plenty of game to be found in these jungles. Tigers, bison, bears, panthers, elk, nilghau, antelope, and spotted deer are to be found, besides all kinds of small game; but if the 'sahib log' (gentlemen) wish to be successful, they must take some one with them who knows the haunts of the animals; so, with your permission, I will take my leave for the present, and fetch Kis-timah the 'peon' (policeman), and Veerepah the 'dhoby' (washerman), both of whom are good 'shekarries' (hunters), and will be useful to your honours." So saying, he made a profound obeisance, and retired gracefully.

As he strode away, I heard him muttering audibly, though rather *sotto voce*, "Oh, fool of an old man that you are, what have you done? Your face will be-

* "Shekar," sport.

come black before the sahib log, if neither the peon nor the dhoby are to be found ; and if, ' God helping,' they should be at home, still, perhaps, those jungle animals of defiled fathers will not allow themselves to be seen, and again I shall eat dirt. Abah ! Abah ! Toba !"

" Well, my chickens !" exclaimed W——, " as the old Moslem gives so favourable an account of the place, I think we cannot do better than halt a day or two, provided the old begum raises no objections to the proposition, for I have another strong reason for wishing to remain here a short time, which is, that our supply of liquor will not last the trip, if we get on as fast as we have done, for when it was ordered I did not think we should have found it quite such thirsty weather. By stopping here a few days, I shall be enabled to send a coolie to the mess for a couple of chests more of Bass's pale ; for, between ourselves, this hot and dusty weather, beer is as necessary to keep one up to the mark, as my grass-cutter's wife's milk is to my bereaved Brinjarry pups, whose canine mother died in convulsions, leaving her orphan progeny to my paternal care, and I, like a good guardian, have turned them over to the care of my grass-cutter's wife, who nurses and suckles all six, with her own little animal, and as they tumble about in her lap, howling, squalling, and caterwauling, I think the father would have some difficulty in swearing as to which was his own. He, however, looks upon his wife's services as a good speculation,

as I feed her well, and he pockets an extra pagoda* once a month ; for the other day the scoundrel came up to me, grinning and showing his teeth, with the request to be permitted to provide another wife to bring up the Poligar greyhound's litter ; and when I did not agree to his proposal, he had the impudence to try and persuade me that his wife's family were all growing 'berry handsome' about the face, on account of the good milk."

"Well!" answered Jock, "I must say they appear to be a very thriving family, and do credit to their 'bringings up.' But what do you say to my proposal of politely insinuating to the begum, that time hangs heavily on our hands in the evenings, and that a *nautch* (dance) now and then would be much appreciated, for I am quite sure some of her dancing girls would prefer enlivening our spare hours to wasting their sweetness on the desert air. Do you not think a gentle hint, or a polite intimation of the general wish, with our united salaam, would have the desired effect with the *khanum sahiba* (lady)?"

"Hout awa, mon," put in the doctor ; "if that's your little game, I should just guess you'd be better leaving the affair to me, inasmuch as I'm invited to visit her ladyship this morning."

"What? Eh? What's that, Saw-bones?" exclaimed W——. "You going to visit the begum? Why! you old reprobate, you have got the start of us all."

* Pagoda—three rupees and a half.

“ Yees; and this child intends to keep it, too,” replied the doctor, with a knowing grin, and a succession of very audible grunts, which, with him, always denoted intense satisfaction.

“ Whatever can be up? Is she ill?” asked Mac.

“ No—not vary—that is, I could na just say that she’s doun-right ill,” answered the doctor; but she sent for me last night, after dinner, and made me to understand that she was uneasy about her insides, hinting that she thought she had been struck with the evil eye. Weel! ye must know that I did na just remember what the *vade mecum* prescribes for sich-like a disease, and as the medicine chest was made up, an’ I did na think it was worth while to unpack it, by way of an experiment, I sent her negressship a good big bottle o’ stiff gin toddy, a trifle stronger than I was then imbibing, and I reckon she found this potent remedy so conducive to her feelings, that early this morning she sent that ugly black henchman, of the neuter gender, with a mouthful of compliments, and what I esteemed verra much better, a basket of fine grafted mangoes as a present to your humble servant; and that dark, ill-looking functionary informed me, in that queer squeaky voice, peculiar to the third sex, that his mistress was so much better for the clever Hackeem’s (doctor’s) medicine, that she wanted to see him again personally some time during the morning; so ye see, boys, there is some good in the profession, after all, for oft-times it gives us the means and ways of ingratiating ourselves wi’ the fair

sex, e'en though we are not, maybe, just so young and smooth-skinned as we might ha' been, Ugh! ugh! ugh!"

Well done, Bones," said I. "You have indeed commenced the attack well, but the trail must be closely followed if good is to come of it. Now listen, and I will unfold a plan which must, if properly carried out, ensure success, or I resign all pretensions to strategy in managing old women.

"It is evident, from your account, that your patient has acquired a liking for your resuscitating fluid, and has confidence in your *gin*-eopathical genius. Taking this for granted, 'Go, thou, oh learned man, at once, and prepare a good quart bottle of the same stiff stuff, taking care to mix it strong enough to make her wince again, and cause her oculars to condense water in the same quantity as Mrs. Parasina's are said to have done, when her infuriated husband ordered his precocious 'hofspring,' Master Hugo, to have his head amputated as a cure for the heart complaint, *vide* the Poets. Leave me to write the directions on the label of the bottle in Hindostani, and give the spell time enough to work, which it will do after she has swizzled a few glasses more or less; then you drop in upon her, and if her heart will not have become sufficiently softened to grant you any little request or favour you may have to make—oh, you sly dog, doctor!—call me—too late for dinner."

"Oh, ye chiel o' the deil! ye Irregulars are maist as bad as ranting wild Irishmen!" exclaimed the doc-

tor, when I had concluded my oration ; but I do not just know at present what better to propose ; so, boy, come here, ye ne'er-do-weel, and fetch me the gin."

"Weel, weel!" he continued, as the flask was produced, "that'll do; there's maist two-thirds o' the bottle left, and we'll just fill up the rest wi' strong tea, to disguise it, so that she'll no' be suspecting o' having only one salubrious concoction in the shop, like that old skinflint, Duncan McQuæ, the auld Glasgow medicaster (where I performed the rudiments at twa and saxpence a week) used to prepare for the poor town-folk, wha got their ain bottles filled for two-pence.

"Ah, gentlemen, you'll hardly believe"—here the doctor made a fearfully wry face—"that this child had, when a growing loon, to swallow a good gill of the washings o' a molasses cask, season'd wi' jalap, every Monday morning of his apprenticeship, to lay the worm in his stomach, and to prevent him from eating too much during the week. Oh! Duncan McQuæ, Duncan McQuæ! I do not wish ye any waur, where ye are noo, than to be swimming in your own 'regimen for all disorders, from elephantiasis to tape-worm.' Oh, the verra recollection makes me feel ill and squeamish. Now," he continued, screwing up his dry old countenance, as he tasted the brew; "come here, and make out a prescription to this effect, in your best Hindostani—'*One glassful to be taken every quarter of an hour or oftener if required.*' Ugh! ugh! ugh! Let me see—that'll just allow sax glasses, by rule, for the hour and a half I shall be at my breakfast, and

that's no allowing for the little requirings. Ugh! ugh! ugh!"

I wrote the label as directed, and the draught was despatched to the begum, with plenty of salaam from the doctor, who grunted and purred like an old tom cat, from extreme satisfaction, until he fell asleep in his chair.

Almost at this moment the Patel returned with the two villagers, accompanied by Chineah, my head she-karry or huntsman, with the rest of my gang, which numbered about a dozen at that time.

Chineah was quite a celebrated character in his way, and merits description. He was middle-sized, of dark olive colour, rather slightly made, with small quick eyes, placed very much apart, a straggling moustache, and an apology for a beard, in the shape of a few stiff hairs, sticking out like cat's whiskers, from the point of his chin, which he pulled and twisted about most violently whenever he got excited.

He wore an old cast-off green shooting-coat, a dirty brown *langooty* or waist-cloth, untanned deer-skin gaiters, and soldiers' ammunition boots, which were oftener slung over his shoulders than worn on his feet. His long, coarse black hair was twisted round his head, being partially covered with a skull-cap of some strange looking material, of which the kind and quality were perfectly undistinguishable from grease and dirt.

Round his waist was a broad leather belt, hung round with numerous pouches, containing ammuni-

tion, a small axe made by the celebrated Arnatchellum of Salem, a huge shekar knife, and a *chuckmuck*, or leather bag, with flint, steel, and tinder. To complete his appearance, a telescope and brandy flask hung from each shoulder, and in his hand he carried my favourite double two-ounce rifle, a masterpiece, by Westley Richards. From his cocky mien and jaunty swagger, our friend evidently thought no "small beer" of himself, and he was, I must own, an invaluable personage in his way, being a first-rate tracker, cool and steady in the time of danger, a wonderful supporter of fatigue, and the most persevering follower after large game, besides being entirely devoted to me. His only fault was his love of *rackee* (spirit made from the sap of the Palmyra palm, date, or cocoa-nut tree).

The rest of the gang, who were almost naked, with the exception of the waistcloths, leather skull-caps, and their sandals, carried my other guns and light, short bamboo spears. Each had a bill-hook stuck in his waistcloth behind, which they used with great dexterity in cutting their way through the jungle, and two carried large American back-woodsman's axes slung at their back, and another a *mushak* or leather bottle containing water. Both the village shekarries were in similar costume, and each carried a long native matchlock on his shoulder, and a huge knife in his belt.

"Well, Chineah," said I, "what news of shekar have you got?"

“*Boht utcha kubber hy, sahib*” (there is very good news, sir). “All people tell that, near Botta Singarum, one village two coss* off, there got one *burra bagh* (big tiger), who kill plenty men, sahib; Kistimali, this man here, he tell, eat one old woman yesterday. *Boht shytan hy, sahib* (he is a great devil, sir), for though all shekarmen, and village people, plenty, plenty looking, never can find, when all come home, tiger go kill one man. *Wo burra chor hy, sahib* (he is a great thief, sir). Ah, sahib, this very good shekar country. All *janwars* (beasts) plenty got; suppose master stop here few days, plenty, plenty shooting. This dhoby man, very good shekarry, know all this country, shoot plenty years in this jungle; other day kill one cheeta, now bring master skin, suppose some gentleman want buggy mat.”

“Well! that will do,” said I; “go all of you to the tent, and Yacoob Khan (my head servant) may give each of you a glass of *rackee* and some tobacco; after which you will all go to the village of Botta Singarum, and there find out all you can about the haunts of this tiger. Promise the villagers plenty of *bucksheesh* (presents) if they assist you, and I will come with Kistimah, the peon, after I have had breakfast. Chineah, take care that no shot is fired at deer or peafowl. Do not loiter on the road, for I shall not be long after you; and keep a bright look out for the tiger’s *pugs* (footprints). Well, gentlemen,” continued I, to the other officers, “you have heard the news;

* A coss is about two miles.

who is going after the man-eater with me? I intend starting immediately after breakfast for the village, near which he is said to prowl; then, what steps I may take, will depend upon the information I may there receive."

"Oh! we will all go, except the doctor," exclaimed W——, "and he will take charge of our camp, as he does not shoot, and has an engagement, which, as there is a lady in the case, must not on any account be put off. What say you, 'Sawbones,' will you superintend the catering for dinner, and arrange matters about the nautch?"

"Yees, yees," replied the kind-hearted old Scotchman, "gang yere ways, gang yere ways, and tak ye care and kill the tiger, and dunna let him kill ony o' ye; for though there's not much more use o' sich like folk than a pack of wild Irishmen, I do not want to ha' ony o' ye scragged."

CHAPTER IV.

Fool. Can'st tell, why one's nose stands i' the middle of his face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep his eyes on either side his nose; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

KING LEAR.

THE MAN-EATER'S LAIR.

The start.—The man-eater's depredations.—His habits described.—His last victim.—His trail.—We are on his track.—More game.—The scent becomes warm.—The lair.—The remains of many victims discovered.—The plan for the morrow.—A resolution.—W——'s idea of *shekar*.—We arrive in camp.—The Pill's garden.—The bath.—Dinner.—The doctor's visit to the Begum.—Effect of his medicine.—My future husband.—The nautch arranged.

DURING breakfast, sundry modes of proceeding with regard to this tiger were discussed, but no particular plan was settled upon.

When the meal was finished, we donned our *shekar* gear, mounted our nags, and started for Botta Singarum, each followed by a horsekeeper, carrying a gun, rifle, or boar spear. Kistimah led the way, and as we went along, I asked him what he considered the best plan to follow.

He answered, in a remarkably shrewd manner, that he hardly knew what to advise, as this was no common tiger, or it would have been easy enough to arrange matters; "but," added he, "these *man-eaters*

are so desperately cunning that one can hardly ever be up to their moves. It is of no use picketing bullocks in the places he frequents, for he will not touch them. I have frequently known him to carry off the man who was watching the cattle, and leave the herd untouched. One is never sure of his movements; he is so cunning that he very seldom shows himself, and although, after he has carried off some one, I have frequently followed his trail for miles, yet his lair has not yet been discovered, and I believe he never remains two nights in the same place. They say he has killed more than forty people within the last six months; and as I know myself that sixteen post runners have been missed within that time, I have no doubt but that he has carried them off. The *dauk** post runners will not go alone now; they carry the *tappal* bags in bands of five or six, armed, and with fire-sticks, and even then, so great is the fear inspired by this brute, that they often choose to go by an out-of-the-way road rather than run the chance of meeting him. He would be a lucky man, indeed, who killed this beast, for great rewards are offered for his skin. I have followed his trail many a long day, and once got a sight of him as he was drinking; but when I tried to steal near enough to be certain of my aim, he got wind of me, and sprang into the thick jungle. I saw him very distinctly, as the sun was fast setting, and he appeared to me to be a different colour to other

* *Dauk* or *tappal*—Indian post. The letters being carried in leather bags, on men's shoulders, who are relieved every five miles.

tigers, being of a dirty yellow, the stripes not showing."

"Well, Kistimah," said I, "the only way to make sure of the colour of his skin is to bag him; and this is the way I propose setting about it. When we arrive at the village, I shall order the *tassildar* (head police authority) to assemble as many beaters as he can, to be ready at the earliest dawn to-morrow, and we will try and beat him out. To-day we will follow up his trail, and visit some of the places where he has been lately seen; perhaps by good luck we may come across him."

"Well, sahib, your plan is good; you speak like a book, and I have nothing better to propose; still I am not very sanguine of success, for he is a very old and cunning devil; but, *inshallah* (please God), I'll burn his whiskers for him yet. Who is the tiger of defiled fathers, that he should cast dirt on our beards?"

By this time the village appeared in view, and I sent on Kistimah to warn the head man of our arrival.

He came out to meet us as we entered the village, and we dismounted and seated ourselves under the shade of a large tarmarind tree, in front of the *tannah*, or police station.

After the usual compliments and salaams, he proceeded to tell us of the great devastation this man-eater had caused in all the villages round about, and he offered to give every assistance in his

power to enable us to find his haunts and destroy him.

Having arranged all about the beaters to be collected from the neighbouring villages, and ordered them to be ready to take the field before dawn the following morning, we went out with a party of villagers to a well, about a hundred and fifty yards from the village, near which a woman was said to have been carried off by the tiger the day before, as she was drawing water in the evening about dusk.

I examined the place attentively, and although the marks of the tiger's pugs were effaced near the well from a flock of goats having passed by, yet near a tamarind tree, some little distance off, they were plainly visible, and even the marks of dried blood and some long hair were left on the roots.

I also noticed the place behind a bush, where the herbage was pressed down, and the marks still left in the dust showed that the cunning brute had lain for some time on the look-out, before he seized his prey.

Here I found Chineah, the dhoby, and the rest of the gang in deep consultation, and was just in time to hear the fag-end of a long string of curses, maledictions and prophecies, in which it seemed to be allowed, by all parties present, that this tiger's female relations were anything but a chaste lot, and that he would be sure to come to a bad end.

I noticed that the trail of his retreat did not lead in the same direction as that from whence he came, and he seemed to have made the circuit of the village two

or three times before he fell in with his victim. I followed the marks of his pugs through some rather open custard apple jungle, to the dry sandy bed of a nullah, or watercourse, where the trail was very plain; and although there were no marks of blood to be seen, yet I knew that he had still carried his victim, as the pugs of his fore-feet were more deeply imprinted in the sand than those of the hind, from the extra weight he carried in his mouth, whereas I have observed that the marks of the hind-feet are generally the plainest.

A little further on I perceived a large patch of dry blood, round which the flies were buzzing, and from the marks in the sand I knew that the brute had laid down the body of his victim for a moment, in order, perhaps, to get a better gripe.

Whilst showing this to W——, I noticed marks in the sand which made me believe that his victim had not been quite dead at this time, for there were impressions as if she had made convulsive clutches with her hands.

I tracked him down this nullah for upwards of a mile, until we came to a pool of water. The banks, which had become steeper and higher, were covered with dense thorny jungle, which waved darkly overhead. Here the pugs of the tiger were much obliterated by the marks of other wild animals, amongst which I noticed those of two bears, a cheeta, and innumerable signs of spotted deer, pig, and jungle sheep.

Near the other side of the pool I observed marks as if he had again laid the body down, whilst he drank, for there were impressions in the sand, round which swarms of flies were buzzing, and although there were no stains of blood to be seen, I knew something must have attracted them ; besides which, there were two distinct trails, which showed that he had gone to the water, drank, and returned to the body.

As we continued on trail down the nullah, at times we disturbed herds of spotted deer and "*sounders*" (herds) of pigs, and an old female bear and two half-grown cubs were seen trotting along in front of us ; but we let her go undisturbed, for we were after nobler game.

On we went for about two miles further, when we came to a place overgrown with high grass, where the *nullah* divided into two courses for about eighty yards, when it joined again, forming an island, which was covered with long dry grass, reeds, and brushwood.

There the man-eater's trail was crossed by that of a tigress and her two half-grown cubs. We were still enabled to distinguish the pugs of the man-eater from their peculiar form, and continued to follow them for about half-a-mile further, when the trail quitted the nullah, and led us into dense thorny jungle, through which we made our way in Indian file ; and as we went along I pointed out to Jock small pieces of rag and long hair sticking on the thorns of a

bush, proving that the tiger had brought his victim that way.

“Gentlemen,” said I, “as the scent begins to warm, please look to your guns, and be ready in case we may surprise him. W——, I wish you would take the rear, and prevent the people from straggling. Chineah, keep near me with my second gun, and Rungasawny, do you cut the way in front with as little noise as possible. We may very possibly come across him sleeping somewhere in this thick cover after his feed, so keep a bright look-out on all sides, and take care and make as little noise as you can in getting through the bushes.”

We were in single file, I leading, with much difficulty, through the thick jungle, which had become very dark from the dense foliage overhead.

The intense silence which reigned around was broken now and again, as we moved slowly on, by the crackling of a twig under-foot, or a low grunt from some one of the gang, as a sharp thorn entered his naked and unprotected shoulder. At times was heard the distant bark of the elk, or a pattering of feet, as a herd of deer or a sounder of pigs got scent of us, and skirled away frightened through the thickets, or a peacock rose with a loud cry, scared by our movements.

On we went, the trail still distinctly visible, when suddenly I fancied I heard a slight noise. I halted the gang, and whispered, or rather made signs to them, to lie quiet, for we were almost on our hands

and knees, and laid my ear to the ground to listen. We distinctly heard grating sounds, like the gnawing of bones, accompanied by low snarls and growls. I noticed Chineah's eyes sparkling with excitement, as he lay listening to the ominous noises; and the convulsive grabs he made at the few bristles which adorned the point of his chin told me what was passing in his mind. Not a word was spoken, though I saw the eyes of the gang were following my movements.

I examined the nipples of my rifle to see that the powder was well up, and making signs to Chineah with my spare gun, and Mac, who was next me, to follow, I cautioned the others to be perfectly quiet, until they heard a shot, and stole gently forward on my hands and knees, moving with the greatest caution, and stopping every now and again to reconnoitre.

We made our way with great difficulty through the dense underwood for about a hundred yards, the noise becoming plainer and more distinct as we advanced, until at last we emerged into an open glade, with a large black rock on one side, surrounded with jungle.

Here, looking cautiously around, I found the noise proceeded from two jackals, who were munching and tearing the flesh from some half-stripped human bones. These immediately got wind of us, and slunk away growling into the bush. After examining the place thoroughly, to make sure that the object of our

search was not there, I gave a low whistle, which brought up the rest.

This was evidently the hecatomb of the man-eater, for I counted, from skulls and remains of half-eaten bodies, about twenty-three victims of both sexes, as we could see, from the hair, clothes, broken bangles (armlets), and gold and silver ornaments belonging to native women.

We picked up two massive silver bracelets belonging to his last victim, whose fresh remains exhibited marks of tattooing, which were recognised by one of the villagers who was with us. We also found two gold *teekas*, or neck ornaments, which mark the "*married*" woman, and a knife, which the dhoby assured us he knew as having belonged to a post-runner who had been killed about a month before.

The stench from the decayed animal matter was almost insupportable, and we were glad to leave it and breathe the fresh air once more. I gave orders to the gang to collect the remains, but not to bury them, until they had been seen by the village authorities; as I thought that some would be recognised, and their friends might wish to inter them with their "caste" ceremonies.

"What a fearfully sickening sight it is!" said Mac. "I declare it has made me feel quite queer, and given me an all-overishness I shall not get over for a week."

"I wish we had brought some beer with us," said W——, with something very nearly approaching to

a sigh, "for I want a draught to wash my throat after the tainted air I have been inhaling, which has half suffocated me. Come, Chineah, produce your master's brandy-flask, and let us have a little refreshment after our exertions."

"Poor little woman!" exclaimed Jock; "look, here is a long lock of her hair attached to a piece of scalp, that I found sticking to my boot as I came out—I shall keep it as a souvenir."

"Well," said I, "the only souvenir that I should care to keep, to remind me of this day's scene, would be the skull of the man-eater; and if my right-hand has not forgotten its cunning, and my grooved bore does not fail me—which, all praise to the Bishop of Bond Street and Westley Richards, it never has done yet—that trophy shall yet adorn my domicile, for I do not intend to leave a stone unturned until I bag the brute. My gang shall sleep at Botta Singarum to-night, so as to be ready for work at dawn to-morrow; and I vote we ask for volunteers among the detachment, and allow the steadiest men to take their muskets with them, so as to defend the line of beaters. It must, however, be an understood thing that no one is to fire a shot at any other game until our object is attained, or all chance of finding him is over; when we will finish the day by a general beat, bagging everything."

"Yes," said W——, "you are perfectly right; there must be no firing at deer or hog. That is the only way of doing the thing so as not to lose a chance;

but, as it is now getting late, let us go back to the village, caution the police authorities again about the beaters, mount our nags, and be in time for the Doctor's catering—for, between ourselves, I am powerfully peckish. 'By the piper that played before Moses,' it is worth while going out shekar, were it only for the appetite it creates, and the relish it gives one for beer."

On arrival at the village, we arranged all matters with regard to the number of beaters required. The *ameldar*, or head man of the village, sent to all the neighbouring hamlets to collect men; the gang established themselves for the night in a choultry or *caravanserai*, after having begged some coin from us to buy sheep and fowls on the plea of sacrifices being necessary to certain "sawmies" (Hindoo deities) to ensure good luck on the morrow; and mounting our horses amid the "salaams," "mashallahs," and "inshallahs" of the villagers, we rode back to camp—the scene we had that day witnessed, our hopes of the morrow, and sundry hazardous speculations as to the Doctor's success with the Begum, forming the chief topics of our conversation *en route*.

We arrived in camp just before sunset, and were delighted to see the old Pill carefully watering what, to the uninitiated, must have appeared like a garden of straw, but we knew that a goodly store of "*long corks*" (claret) and "Bass's" nectar, "may his shadow never be less," was cooling in the wind for our evening repast.

We all adjourned to our different tents to enjoy our bath, which the day's fag rendered particularly refreshing. In no part of the world is the real luxury of a bath so appreciated as it is in India. There you bathe the first thing you get up in the morning; again, when you come back tired after a hot morning parade; again, before you sit down to dinner; and, in the hot weather, if you want to sleep well, you will plunge into your bath just before you turn in for the night. Are you overcome and oppressed by the hot weather? Take a bath. Do you return tired to your tent after a hard day's fag under a hot sun? Nothing in the world serves sooner to dispel fatigue and lassitude, than a few chatties (earthen pots) of cold water thrown over the body. Trust an old soldier, my gentle reader, there is some truth in the cold water cure.

Refreshed and enlivened by our ablutions, we all met at dinner, "hungry as hunters," and the Doctor's catering met with our universal approbation. After the clattering of dishes, and the popping of bottles had somewhat subsided, Mac astonished the Doctor's weak nerves with an account of the tiger's lair, and at last worked up the old Scotchman to such a state of excitement that he jumped up, gave his thigh a tremendous slap with the palm of his hand, and exclaimed, "Dom, but this child will gang wi' ye in the morn just to ha' a crack at the bluid-thirsty auld cannibal!"

"Bravo, Doctor! We shall be most happy to have

your company," answered I; "but, old Sly-boots, what about the visit to the Begum? How fared you there? Eh?" continued I, giving him a sharp dig in the ribs with my forefinger, which made him grunt again.

"Yes, out with it, Doctor!" cried W——. "Don't mince matters, but give us a full account."

"Husht your whisht, and I'll tell ye all about it," replied the Doctor. "You must know that I went to the bungalow about two hours after you left camp, and that black gentleman of no sex, who had evidently previously received his instructions, conducted me at once into the centre room, where I saw a figure, closely veiled in a chedder (cloth) which concealed everything but a pair of sparkling eyes, sitting tailor-fashion on a carpet, wi' two or three decent-looking lassies attending her.

"When I entered, and she saw who it was, she waved her hand, inviting me very graciously to seat myself near her, which I did. She sent the other women away, and then, with a knowing wink, pulling the cloth away from her face, passed me the hubble-bubble she was smoking when I first went in. I found her to be a guid '*auld has-been*,' that is, the remains of a fine woman, with a very pleasing and comfortable cast of countenance. As I was puffing away, with my understandings twisted in such a knot that I started the seams of my galligaskins, she kept smiling and nodding in such a way at your humble servant, that I fairly thought that I should ha' had to

cut and run, for she seemed to ha' made a dead set at me, so I just told her I was a married man, wi' fourteen sma' bairns at hame; but even the prospect o' sae mony incumbrances did not seem to discourage her—she was as sweet on me as ever, and presented me with betel-nut and some sweetmeats, both of which I refused. She then offered me the identical flask I had sent her in the morning, which I took, and, just to show her that I was no afraid o' my ain drugs, I raised the bottle to my lips, lifted it higher and higher, but de'il a drop of the creature was there in it. 'Twas as dry as a bone. I gave the old lady a look from the corner of my eye, but what was my astonishment when I saw her apparently in a fit, on the broad o' her back, almost bursting wi' laughter. When she came to herself and could speak, she gave me a gentle hint that a full bottle was better than an empty one, and that the stuff was good, and agreed with her constitution; so I couldna do less than promise her more.

“ We then got talking together quite familiar-like, and she told me that her daughter was as beautiful as a peri, and was about to be married to the Nawab of ——, at the same time asking me if I had ever seen her intended son-in-law. Determined to pay out the daughter, whom I heard joking at my expense wi' the ither lasses, behind a purdah (screen) in the next room, and commenting on my personal appearance in no verra flattering terms, I pretended to be intimately acquainted wi' the gentleman in question, whom I

described to be rather less in stature than myself, and not nearly so good-looking. I also said he was much to be pitied, for he had the misfortune to have a curious-shaped lump (sometimes running) in the middle of his face, with a great black patch o' hair underneath, and I never heard tell that any doctor had been bold enough to offer to remove it.

“As I said this, the giggling behind the curtain ceased suddenly, and I knew the shot had gone home, from a faint cry of horror, which I conclude came from the affianced bride. The black factotum seemed to be very grievously affected at my recital : he cocked his head on one side, winked both eyes, screwed up his blubber lips, wrung his hands, and then, as if he could not contain himself, burst into a loud yell, threw himself his whole length on the floor at the Begum's feet, and in great agitation and trembling, in a voice something like the higher notes of a jackal's howl, broken by frequent bursts of sobs and great overflow of tears, began to inform her that he, the most miserable of her slaves, had once seen an individual labouring under a similar misfortune ; that he was always fearfully vicious and cranky, especially at certain times of the day when the pain from the tumour drove him mad ; and he conjured his mistress not to send her faithful servant to the harem of such a terrible bud-surut (ugly man), who would make him eat dirt all the rest of his miserable existence.

“The old lady, herself, did not seem to care much

about it, the potion had done its work, and she continued to smile very benignantlly on her humble servant, so I gave her a gentle hint that time hung very heavily on our hands in the evenings, and that a nautch, now and then, would much enliven us; upon which she desired me to invite you all over to the bungalow to-morrow evening, and, at the same time, clapping her hands, her servants entered and she gave them orders to prepare a grand 'tamasha' (entertainment). I then took my 'rooksut' (permission to depart), and, as soon as I got back to the tent, despatched a flask of gin with 'boht salaam' (many compliments)."

"Why, you old reprobate!" said W——, "whatever did you mean to insinuate about the Nawab having a lump, and hair in the middle of his face? I have seen him scores of times, and never observed it."

"Weel! You ha' na' guid eyesight," answered the Doctor, "that's certain, for the last time I saw him we wore both a nose and a moustache, and I dunna ken hoo I've exaggerated onything in my description o' his personal appearance. Can I help it if the young lady chooses to take it in a wrong light? Sarve her weel right too. Did I no' hear her jeering at me as I first came in the room, and telling the other lasses that the Fehringees (Europeans) were a clever and wise people, for they always choose the smallest and ugliest old men to make doctors of, as then there was no fear of the women falling in

love wi' them? Ugh! ugh! ugh! But I paid her out in her own coin." And the Doctor's grunts reminded me of a cat well pleased.

"Bravo! Doctor," I exclaimed, "you have done remarkably well, and deserve a leather medal for your gallantry in the attack; as, besides getting us the nautch, you have done your best to disgust the young lady with the thoughts of her future husband, which perhaps may prove to our advantage, for she may now feel disposed to take a more favourable view of mankind in general, as up to the present time she has certainly been, like the flower, 'doomed to blush unseen' and waste her sweetness upon such disgusting lumps of humanity as the Begum's blubber-lipped guardians of the fold."

"Yes," said Jock, "I think old 'Bones' has played his game with a great deal of management, and shown that, although he is perhaps a rum one to look at, he is a good one to go. So here's your health! Stick to your present mode of treatment, and I'll warrant you'll soon gain the patronage of the whole sex."

It was now late, and, as we should have to be in the saddle some time before dawn, the party broke up, each retiring to his tent.

CHAPTER V.

Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing.

HENRY IV.

A BATTUE.

Preliminary arrangements for the beat.—The Doctor's great appearance.—His famous feat.—W—— falls in with tigers.—Fatal accident.—The death of a tiger.—The game warms.—The battue.—Another tiger dies.—The bag of the day.—The Doctor again.—The ceremonies of my gang.

THE next morning we all assembled in my tent an hour before the slightest appearance of dawn, and after having partaken of a hurried collation, which my invaluable servant "Five Minutes" always managed to have ready at the proper time, we mustered about eighty sepoy and troopers with their muskets and carbines, and about twice that number of villagers, well supplied with matchlocks, tomtoms, and dubties,* cholera horns, and other melodious instruments of music of that description; and mounting our nags, preceded by masaltjees or torch-bearers, we started for Botta Singarum.

As we approached the tannah or police-station, we found all the head men of the surrounding villages waiting for us, each attended by several of his people,

* Dubties—native drums.

armed with matchlocks, swords, spears, clubs, or any weapons they could lay hands upon. As we approached the entrance, the crowd of villagers surrounding the building made way for us, and I proceeded to explain to them the arrangements for the battue; which were that a large half-circle of four miles in diameter was to be formed, having for its base the river, which was broad and deep, and along the opposite banks of which I had the evening before given directions that a chain of matchlock-men should be posted, to observe and be prepared to resist the tiger should he attempt to swim over. The nullah, or water-course, and the lair we visited the day before were enclosed, and I distributed the armed sepoy and village authorities among the beaters to see that the line was properly kept; sending the other officers (with the exception of the Doctor, who chose to remain with me) to different places, where I thought they would have a good chance when the game broke.

One of my gang accompanied each; the rest, with most of my suwars, or irregular cavalry troopers, remained with me, and I chose my place in the part of the line that would pass over the nullah and the lair we had seen the day before.

As it was almost impossible to beat that part of the forest, on account of the dense underwood, I had provided my troopers with two hundred rockets in order to drive the game into the more open jungle.

In an hour I received intelligence that the line was

formed ready to advance, and, it being now broad daylight, I gave the signal to move on, by a ferocious flourish of cholera horns, which sound was immediately taken up by all the tomtoms, horns, and dubties; and this discordant music was only surpassed by the unearthly howling and shouting of the beaters, who seemed to vie with each other as to who could utter the most fiendish yells.

The Doctor, who kept near me, was armed with a heavy, single four-ounce rifle which he had taken from one of the gang; and as he marched along he shouted at the top of his voice, in a most ferocious and threatening manner, something that appeared to me to be some very ancient Gaelic war-cry, until his breath failed him. His route was perfectly well marked by strips of his old blue regimental frock-coat, which were left hanging on the thorns of the bushes as he passed.

As we advanced, sudden crashes every now and again in the jungle let us know that the game was afoot. Now a herd of deer, or a sounder of hog were visible for a moment, as they bounded through the thicket in front of us. Sometimes a flock of peafowl passed over our heads, or a swarm of monkeys went jabbering away in the trees above us, shrieking and making faces at us as we passed, and perhaps thinking the Millennium was at hand, from the terrific noise made by the beaters.

Suddenly, cries were heard along the line of "Reech, Reech!" "Yellago bunte!" (a bear, a

bear!) And almost immediately a large female bear and her two cubs came rolling along the line of beaters towards us.

The Doctor gave a fiendish yell, and, unable to restrain his impetuosity, let drive and hit one of the cubs which passed within six paces of him—the recoil of the piece, for which he was not prepared, knocking him down on the broad of his back. The enraged mother charged right at him, overturning a beater in her course, and in a moment more she would have given him a severe mauling, if I had not tumbled her over, dead, with a ball behind the shoulder, as she was in full career towards her fallen enemy. Bones picked himself up, and, though considerably shaken by his fall, rushed frantically to secure his prize, which was struggling in the agonies of death. The other cub was caught alive by one of the beaters.

I reloaded my rifle, and then took the Doctor to task for firing on the lesser game; but it was of no use talking to him, he evidently considered he had performed a great feat, and, although tears ran down his goodnatured old face as he wrung my hand and thanked me over and over again for my lucky shot, still he felt he was quite a hero, and shouted at the top of his voice for the rest to hear him, "I've killed a bar! I've killed a bar! Jock, mon, do ye hear? I've killed a bar!" After much difficulty, I persuaded him to relinquish his much-esteemed trophy to the charge of a beater, and Chineah having reloaded his gun, the line again moved on.

The old man went along delighted as a child ; and amidst a succession of grunts, which with him denoted satisfaction, I heard him muttering something about preserving the skeleton, tanning the skin to make a muff, and boiling down the fat to be sent to an old sister, &c., although the wild animal he had killed was but little larger than a sucking-pig. He strode along perfectly happy, as if he had done his work.

Very shortly afterwards we heard several successive shots on the right, where I knew W—— was posted, and almost immediately a beater came running up with the news that three tigers were afoot, and that W—— had wounded one severely, but that it had taken refuge in the high grass we had passed through yesterday.

Ordering the line to halt, and taking three troopers with me, loaded with rockets, to drive them out should it be necessary, I went to join W——, who had just reloaded his guns as I came up.

He told me that he had seen three tigers, one of which he had wounded, after having fired five shots as they were bounding through the long grass and brushwood.

I examined the pugs, and found them to be the same as those that had crossed the trail of the man-eater the day before, and which I had supposed to have belonged to a tigress and her two cubs. Several of the beaters saw the wounded tiger linger after the others, and had marked it take refuge in the small island caused by the dividing of the nullah.

It was a kind of bank, raised about three feet above the bed of the water-course, and, perhaps, eighty yards long, by thirty wide, being covered with grass and reeds about five feet high, and so overgrown with low bushes, and tangled underwood, that it would have been impossible for the beaters to have made their way through it.

I posted the Doctor, W——, and some of the gang, with fire-arms, so as to command a view on all sides, cautioning each how to fire so as not to hit any of the rest, and when all was ready Chineah struck a light with his flint and steel, and standing to windward fired the high grass, which was as dry as tinder from the long drought, and blazed up, roaring and crackling, in an instant.

I then took post by a hole in the bank, where the grass bore traces of having been recently disturbed and trodden down, it being, I thought, a likely place for the tiger to break.

Everything promised well ; we were all ready with our arms, and waited with impatience for the appearance of the tigers.

The devouring element had burnt half through the patch ; still we could perceive no signs of their presence, or, indeed, any movement in the grass. The fire roared and crackled like the file-firing of musketry, dark and dense volumes of smoke rose in a huge column against the cloudless sky, and I began to be afraid that the beaters had been mistaken in supposing the brute to have taken refuge in the cover,

when suddenly the air resounded with a fearful roar, and immediately a magnificent tigress and a half-grown cub sprang into the sandy bed of the nullah, from a place close to where the fire had reached. I heard a simultaneous discharge of half-a-dozen shots, and through the smoke I just discerned the brute making a second spring, which was immediately followed by a piercing yell. I knew that some calamity had taken place, and sprang forward just in time to see the infuriated brute tear away the flesh from the thigh to the knee of W——'s poor horsekeeper, who was lying motionless. The tigress, who appeared wounded, was stretched half-leaning over her victim; she turned her head as I approached, and couched, as if to make a spring; I raised my rifle slowly, fearing to injure the poor fellow, and then let drive. The ball went crashing into her brain, and she fell dead on her side, the blood streaming from her mouth and nostrils.

The poor horsekeeper did not appear quite dead, though I saw at once that there was no hope for him; for the whole back part of his head was carried away by the first blow from the paw, which, at the same time, had torn down the flesh from the back of the neck, between the shoulders, as if it had been done with an iron rake. The hands were beating the ground with a nervous, palpitating motion, and two or three tremulous shudders passed over the whole body; but soon all was over, and I gave orders to a couple of coolies to carry the corpse to the village for burial.

One of the shekarries had killed the cub with his matchlock, and the remains of the other were found partially burnt by the fire, W—— having wounded it so severely in the hind-quarters as to prevent it being able to move away on the approach of the line of fire; and the tigress appeared to have remained with her offspring until the fire had actually reached her, for I afterwards remarked that the skin was much singed and burnt in places.

W—— was much affected at the loss of his horse-keeper, for he had been in his service for some years, and had always proved himself a faithful servant. However, as nothing could be done, we retook our station in the line, and the *battue* was continued.

On approaching the lair discovered the day before, we discharged several rockets into it, and a fine bull-nilghau and two cows charged boldly against the line of beaters. Mac broke the shoulder of the bull with a well-directed shot, which stopped him in his mad career, and, stepping up, despatched him with the second barrel as he lay upon the ground before he could pick himself up. He was a very fine specimen, with a long, flowing mane. The two cows broke through the line of beaters and escaped, though one of them appeared severely wounded by a volley from the beaters. A young cheeta was killed by the dhoby, as he attempted to sneak away through the bushes.

We had now driven the game into a large patch of jungle running along the river, on one side of which

was a piece of tolerably open ground, and here we posted ourselves behind trees or rocks, in the most favourable places when the game broke. I also formed a second chain of men armed with muskets and matchlocks, as I knew that an immense quantity of game had been driven into that patch of jungle, and that some of it might escape our first line of guns.

When we were all ready I gave the signal, and the beaters began to drive the game towards us. Sounders of pig and herds of elk and spotted deer burst several times to the edge of the jungle, but always broke back again, as if they dreaded danger in the open ground, and feared to cross it.

At last a sturdy bear showed the way into the plain, and was rolled over by Mac with a single ball. Soon afterwards a herd of sambur (elk) and a sounder of hog broke; and a fine buck, two does, and a sow bit the dust from the united volley poured in from all sides.

Then two cheetas came bounding into the plain, followed by another bear; and one of the former fell by a ball from Kistimah's matchlock, and the other was badly wounded by one of my troopers, and afterwards despatched by the matchlock-men on the second line. The bear was killed by Jock, having made several ferocious charges after he had been wounded, in one of which a cooly was slightly mauled by his claws. Then another cheeta broke, and charged through our line scathless, though several shots were fired at him.

The beaters were now heard approaching very near, and I thought everything in the shape of large game must have been driven out of the inclosed patch of jungle, when suddenly I heard a cry of "Bagh! bagh!" (a tiger! a tiger!) from one of my troopers, and almost immediately I saw a magnificent full-grown tiger stealing quietly across a little open glade or break in the jungle.

He was almost broadside on to me, but I was afraid of firing, as I saw a group of my people were beyond him in the line of fire. I let him go on a little, threw up my rifle, and took a steady aim just behind his shoulder, pulling the trigger just as he moved his forearm whilst walking.

When the smoke cleared away a little, I had the pleasure of seeing him stretched lifeless on his side; my ball having passed through his heart, death was instantaneous. He was a fine, full-grown male tiger, whose beautifully marked skin measured eleven feet four inches from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail. I got another shot at a buck spotted deer, which I wounded in the hind-quarters, paralyzing them, and W—— finished him for me.

The beaters now made their appearance; they had killed four deer, three pigs and a bear, and reported that two other tigers, some nilghau, and several herds of deer and hog had burst through their line.

One of their number was severely wounded in the thigh by a huge boar, which charged and knocked him down after he had been wounded. The flesh of

the thigh was cut as clean as if it had been done with a knife, so we bandaged it up as well as we could, the Doctor devoting a certain part of his nether clothing for the business, which performance caused us no little amusement, as we could not for some time make out what the old gentleman was after.

Constructing a litter with the branches of trees was the work of a few minutes, and we sent him to the village carried by coolies. Although he must have suffered a good deal of pain, he kept up his spirits in a remarkable manner, and seemed quite satisfied when he saw his antagonist brought in dead. We halted by the side of the river, where we bathed, whilst the beaters were collecting the game, of which the following is the list:—Two tigers and two cubs, three cheetas and one cub, three bears and two cubs (one taken alive), five elk, four spotted deer, four pig (four small squeakers, taken alive), one porcupine, and one bull-nilghau—total, thirty-two head of game.

I then despatched the gang to cut some stout poles, which, being thrust through the back sinews of the game, the coolies were enabled to carry it away, slung on their shoulders, after having disembowelled the nilghau and deer. The total weight of our bag may be fancied, as over two hundred stout coolies were employed to carry it, and even then they went but slowly, had to rest often, and were frequently relieved by their comrades.

My gang went in front with their bill-hooks and axes, cutting down the branches so as to enable the

loaded coolies to pass, and as the jungle was thick in some places, our course was necessarily slow.

As we approached the village of Botta Singarum all the cholera horns, tomtoms, and dubties, forming up in procession, poured forth their notes of triumph; and, joined by the voices of the united company of beaters, bearers, coolies, servants, sepoy, and villagers, the row was something fearful, and better to be imagined than heard. When we came near our camp the procession was re-formed; my gang and some of the sepoy amused themselves by dancing in front of the dead tigers, before which our guns were carried decked out with flowers, and singing an extemporary song, the burden of which was something to this effect:—"That great and gallant deeds had been performed that day; that four tigers of burnt fathers having eaten dirt, and the brave and generous gentlemen being satisfied with their day's sport, plenty of buksheesh and inam (rewards and presents) would, as a matter of course, fall to the lot of their well-wishing followers, whose mouths were watering and stomachs panting with the thoughts of how they would be filled by the sheep which the well-known charitable and generously-minded gentlemen would certainly distribute." The chorus being taken up by the whole party, was something deafening.

The game was laid down on the open space of ground in front of the bungalow, and the ceremony of breaking up was commenced by the oldest shekarry present burning the whiskers of the dead tiger, whilst

he sang a monotonous song, in which he abused the whole race, and finished by spitting on his face and right paw.

The Begum, who, it appears, was watching the performance with great interest from the bungalow, sent one of her followers to me with plenty of salaam, and a request that I would send her a tiger's heart and liver, with some of the blood, for medicine: which I did, to her great satisfaction.

The game being now all broken up and cut into pieces, a fine haunch of venison was sent to our tents, and a young doe, which, when wounded, had been properly "*hollolled*" by a Mussulman (that is to say, had its throat cut whilst the operator muttered a certain text of the Koran, asking a blessing on the meat), sent for the acceptance of the Begum; the rest was divided among the whole number of troopers, sepoy, beaters, and camp-followers.

We also made a subscription amongst us, which was divided as buksheesh, and every one went to his home satisfied and happy.

CHAPTER VI.

“ What are these,
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire ;
That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth
And yet are on 't? Live you? or are ye aught
That man may question ?” MACBETH.

THE GANG.

The Begum's invitation accepted—My shekar gang.—Googooloo's history and the discovery of the Yanadi caste.—Googooloo's gifts.—Insinuations.

As I was standing superintending the preparation of the skins, which my gang were pegging down tightly on the ground and rubbing with cocoa-nut oil and turmeric to preserve them, the black aide-de-camp of the Begum came up, and, with many compliments on the part of his mistress, informed me that she would only be too happy if we would do her the honour of attending a nautch that evening.

I accepted the invitation on the part of us all, bidding him tell the Khanum sahiba “that her kindness had made a deep and lasting impression on our hearts, and that, ere the evening gun boomed through the camp, our shadows would cross her hospitable threshold,” and then joined the other officers, who were sitting smoking in front of my tent and discussing the sports of the day.

“Do you think, Harry,” asked W——, as I came up, “that the tiger you killed to-day was the man-eater who has committed all these depredations lately?”

“No,” I replied, “Kistimah assures me that it is not; and I have no reason to doubt his assertion, as tigers are common enough in this part of the country. I shall, however, again try for him, for I hear we shall be detained here three or four days longer, as the Begum expects some one coming from Hydrabad. You are aware that I have sent the best of my gang to follow up his trail, so we have not heard the last of him; for if Googooloo and Naga are at fault and cannot find out his whereabouts, I do not believe that there is a man between this and Cape Comorin who can.”

“I readily believe you,” answered W——. “There is not such another shekar-gang in the country, and Googooloo is as certain as a bloodhound if he once gets on trail; I have seen him track a bear over rocky ground when I could not observe the mark of a single pug—it must be innate instinct.”

“Yes,” said Jock, “he is a wonderful fellow. But what astonishes me most is the extraordinary manner in which he watches his master’s eye, as if he could there read what was required of him; and when he speaks I can only understand a word or two now and then, although I have a tolerable knowledge of the different lingos.”

“You must give us a history of the gang after

dinner, Harry," said W——, "for we have not time now, as the first bugle has sounded some time."

"Yees," put in the Doctor, who just joined us, "and ye had all better be quick, too, as my stomach has been crying cupboard this long time, an' this child will no be answerable for his actions 'gin ye come not soon after the viands are placed on the table. Ugh! ugh! ugh!"

So we all rose and returned to our tents, and after a refreshing bath again met at the table. We were in good appetite for our dinner after the day's fag, and "Five Minutes," whose ordinary colour was a bright black, assumed quite a greenish tinge, as he blushed at the praise his *cuisine* called forth.

The old Doctor was in great spirits, and became actually uproarious when Mac, alluding to his feat with the bear, proposed his health as a sportsman who that day had made his *début*, and he actually crowed and purred again when I advised him now to adopt a bear for his crest, with the motto, "Ursus Vinci."

"Now, Harry," said W——, when dinner was over and cheroots and brandy panee (water) circulated, "you must give us the history of the gang."

"Yes, yes!" vociferated the rest, "let us have it."

"Very well, gentlemen," said I, drawing in a long pull at my hookah; "I shall begin with Chineah, my head shekarry. He is the son of my old waterman, and has been in my service since he was quite a boy, when he used to carry my powder and shot, and act

as a beater when I went after snipe. I found him very clever in marking down birds, and he seemed to take such an intense delight in going out with me that I bred him up to the work, and taught him to clean and look after my guns, which you know he does now to perfection. This is seven years ago, and now I should hardly know how to do without him.

“He is devoted to my interests, very cool and steady in time of danger, a first-rate hand in picking up news of game, and never so happy as when out in the deep jungle. His only fault is, that he is at times too fond of rackee (spirits), and has too large an establishment of the fair sex, who are always squabbling and fighting for him in the servants’ outhouses.”

“Oh, yes,” said W——, “I know him of old; but tell me about Googooloo, and let us hear where you picked him up.”

“Googooloo’s history is a strange one,” I answered, “and I came across him in an extraordinary way. You may all perhaps remember poor old M—— of the —th, the kindest-hearted fellow, the best shot, and the coolest sportsman who ever pulled trigger, and who came to such an unfortunate end. We were great chums, and were always out together in the jungle; and to his tuition I must attribute my knowledge of forest life, for, although always fond of sport, I must confess I was but a griffin until he took me in hand. Well, we were out together in the Chettagunta jungles, about five years ago, in the

very hottest weather, and had fagged for three days with very little success. There was no possibility of 'stalking,' for, in consequence of the great drought, the leaves and twigs on the ground had become so very dry and brittle that every step we took they cracked under-foot so loudly that the game always took the alarm before we could get within shot. On account of the great heat, we had been expecting the monsoon to break every day, and M—— had observed that it was that day the 6th of June, and that for several years past the hospital register showed the monsoon had broken between the 6th and the 10th. As there was not a cloud to be seen on the deep cerulean sky, I stated my opinion that we should have no change of weather that day, and away we went far into the deep jungle, where we intended to sit up at night by a pool of water, near which a tiger was said to lurk, and where bison often drank. We had come into a beautiful open glade in the jungle, in the centre of which, on a rising ground, stood a magnificent 'banian,' whilst clumps of huge forest-trees were scattered about in groups here and there, giving the place much the appearance of a gentleman's park in England. In a 'jheel' or swamp, which was nearly dry, orchideous plants of every form and hue formed such a parterre that Chiswick itself could hardly equal; and never did I behold such luxurious vegetation. Yet this was in the centre of dark and almost impenetrable jungle, and at least twenty miles from the nearest habitation we knew of.

Whilst we were remarking on the extreme beauty of the scene, suddenly I observed that the sky had become overcast, and thunder was heard rumbling in the distant hills. Presently large drops fell, and we had every indication of a heavy fall of rain. I gave orders to my people to pitch a small hill-tent we had with us as soon as possible, so that at any rate we might keep the guns and ammunition dry, and in the mean time we took shelter under the banian tree, where the people were employed in cutting tent-pegs and gathering firewood. M—— was reclining smoking on a carpet, close to the main trunk of the tree, when suddenly we thought we heard a rustling above our heads, about ten feet from the ground, just where the branches and arms began to shoot, and almost immediately we heard an extraordinary kind of sneeze coming from the same quarter. We started up and seized our guns, but could see nothing, for the whole fork of the tree was covered with masses of various kinds of parasitical plants. ‘Look out, Harry!’ cried M——, ‘there is some beast in that tree; most likely a leopard lying in wait for deer.’ Having warned our people to move out of the way, we walked carefully round, trying to discover where the brute lay hid; but all was now still, and we could see nothing from below. I got up one of the many branches thrown out by the parent stem, and looked carefully among the mass of vegetation which rested on the fork of the tree, still I could perceive nothing. I then got down and climbed upon the shoulders of a

stout cooly, with a couple of men holding me by the calves of my legs, so as to keep me steady, and rifle in hand I made them walk up close to the foot of the tree, M—— standing near ready to cover me with his fire should any beast make a spring. Still I could see nothing. Bidding one of the coolies hand me up some stones, I threw them in the thickest parts of the masses of creepers, when I distinctly heard a low grunting. I desired the coolies to go to that part from whence the noise appeared to proceed, and, after a careful investigation, I thought I saw a pair of bright eyes twinkle, and something black moving about, which at first sight looked like the hair of a bear. I put up my gun and covered the object, but did not like to fire, as I was afraid of only slightly wounding the beast. M——, who saw the motion I made with my gun, asked me what I saw. I told him I thought a bear was concealed in the tree, as I could distinctly see some long black hair. ‘A bear!’ said he, ‘perhaps it is, these gentry often climb trees on the look-out for honey, yet I think it is much more likely to be a black monkey. Fire at it, however, whatever it is, I am ready to look out for squalls, and perhaps it may be a black panther.’ With any other man than M—— I should have hesitated to fire, considering the awkward position I was in, perched on the shoulders of a man who I knew would bolt at the first sign of danger, and expose me not only to a nasty fall, but also to the mercy of a wounded brute. But with M—— I felt quite safe,

knowing his extreme coolness in time of danger, and the fatal accuracy of his aim. Again I raised the rifle to my shoulder and was about to pull the trigger, when I bethought me that if it was only a bear he could not spring on me, and that I could fire with more fatal effect from the tree itself. I accordingly got on to the fork of the tree, and as soon as I got a steady footing I raised my rifle to fire. Again I put it down, thinking that I might only slightly wound the brute by firing in this way, so I gave the black mass of hair a poke with the end of the barrel of my gun in order to stir it up. Imagine my astonishment when I saw the upper part of a human face and a pair of eyes bob up and then go down again! To hang my rifle on a broken branch and whip out my shekar knife was the work of a moment, and thus armed I clutched the supposed animal by the hair, and shouted to M—— and the rest to come up; when the thing I was holding began to moan and struggle, and shortly a curious kind of paws, with huge claws, emerged from below and fastened on my hand, and it was only by frequent blows with the handle of my knife that I could prevent them from tearing the flesh. At that moment I was not sure whether I had not got hold of some kind of chimpanzee or ourang-outang, and I shouted out lustily for help. M——, the shekarries, and coolies soon got up into the tree, and with their assistance I dragged up from a hollow in the trunk two most extraordinary creatures in human shape. One was old and wrinkled, the other

quite a child, and both belonged to the weaker sex, but whether of the genus 'man' or 'monkey' I was not at all sure. They were of a dark olive colour, and the tallest was nothing like four feet high. She was a real beauty, without a stitch of clothing, except a piece of creeper tied round her hair to keep it out of her eyes, which were small, and very piercing when she opened them, but she kept them shut, just taking a peep now and again like a frightened ape. She grunted very hard, and I saw a couple of tears rolling down her weather-beaten and wrinkled cheeks as the gang tied her by the leg to the root of the tree to prevent her running away. The child hung close to the mother, keeping its face hid in her lap, and I had a dog-chain passed round its ankle, and fastened with a padlock to a root also. We looked at them for a long time before we were quite sure whether they were human. I fancied at first that they were some kind of *hybrid*, for I never beheld such strange objects. The nose was nearly flat, the mouth most capacious, and full of large yellow teeth. The arms were long, attenuated, and wizened; and may Jove defend me from such nails as were attached to the extremities of the digits, which resembled more the claws of a huge vulture, both in colour and form, than anything else. M—— said that the existence of these wild people of the forest had been often questioned, but that he had always believed that there were such tribes, having come across their traces in the dense forests to the south of the Neilgherry Mountains.

“ A heavy shower of rain fell in the afternoon, but towards evening the weather cleared up again, and we pitched our tent, built a hut of branches for the people, and lit a huge fire, round which all were assembled, preparing the evening repast. One of the shekarries brought a piece of hard wood with a sharp point, and three or four wild jungle yams, which he said these wild people must have dug up just before we surprised them, as they were quite fresh. I gave the yams to the child, who, after a little hesitation, began to eat, in which operation the mother assisted. I then sent for some raw potatoes, which both ate with great relish, though they still evinced great fear of us, and watched with suspicion every movement we made, with their little twinkling eyes. When our dinner was served we threw them bits of meat and some boiled rice, which seeing us eat, they followed our example. When we took our coffee after dinner I gave them some sugar, at which they evinced their satisfaction by clapping their hands on their thighs as they sat on their heels, smacking their lips and uttering some curious grunting sentences to each other, which neither M—— myself, nor any of our people could understand. Towards evening they appeared to have gained more confidence, and I made one of the servants unfasten the old woman. He had hardly done so, when, finding herself at liberty, she gave herself a shake like a dog on coming out of the water, and with a grunt and a yell sprang into the jungle before any of

our people could stop her. Finding, however, that the child, which was still fastened, did not follow her, she returned, and again crouched down by its side. I made the people take no further notice of them, and gave her more sugar, which she took and ate without hesitation. She now seemed to have made up her mind that we did not intend to do her any harm, for she began to examine us more closely, and even to finger our clothes, which she must have imagined to be of Nature's own providing, for she slunk back alarmed when she saw M—— pull off his cap, as if she thought his head would have followed. At dusk we were all sitting round an immense log-fire. The usual glass of rackee and allowance of tobacco had been distributed to each of the gang, and we were discussing the prospect of the morrow's sport, for we were not inclined to sit up for game that night, when suddenly M—— sprang up and shouted in Hindostani, 'Look out, men ! those *jungle wallahs* are about.' I seized my rifle, and listened attentively, but could hear nothing. M—— said, 'I am sure they are near at hand, for I distinctly heard the chirping of a squirrel, which, you know, is never heard after nightfall, and I noticed the old woman's eye glisten as she caught up the sound.' He was right, for almost immediately four or five arrows fell about our fire, though without hurting any one. I took one to the old woman, and, giving her a lump of sugar and some raw potatoes, told Chineah to lead her towards that

part of the jungle from whence the arrows appeared to come, I following at some little distance with my gun and one or two of my people, to protect him should it be necessary. When we got out of sight of the fire she made a queer noise, like the cooing of the imperial pigeon, which sound was almost immediately taken up in two places from behind some clumps of bushes. Again she uttered a curious note, and shortly afterwards I saw other figures join her in the gloom. At first I felt rather apprehensive for Chineah's safety, but, as they did not seem inclined to offer him any violence, I did not join their party, fearing to give them alarm. After a consultation, which seemed to last nearly a quarter of an hour, between the old woman and her people, they followed her towards our fire. When I came up I found the group consisted of three men, two women, and a child, all in the same state of nature as those we had discovered in the tree. The men were but little over four feet, and the women considerably shorter, and they all wore their hair tied with a piece of creeper at the back of their head, and spreading out behind like a peacock's tail. They had short bamboo bows, the strings of which were formed of the sinews of some animal, and the arrows were reeds hardened by fire, and tipped with the quills of peafowls. They were in great fear when we first approached, but seemed to get over it by degrees, and ate sugar, raw potatoes, and rice with great relish. They held a long communication with the old woman, in a strange

guttural language which none of us could understand ; and she must have allayed their fears, for they all lay down by the fire and slept, or rather pretended to sleep, for every now and then I saw one or the other open his eyes and look suspiciously round. Some of my gang kept watch during the night, and I still kept the first child chained by the leg. In the morning when I got up I found them squatting on their hams in deep consultation. I showed them the skin of a bear which M—— had killed a few days before, and they evidently knew what the animal was at once, for they imitated the noise of his grunting exactly. I pointed out the bullet-holes in the skin, and showed them my gun, which, much to their consternation, I fired against a tree ; and, when their fright had a little subsided, I showed them the hole in the trunk which the bullet had made, and one of my people cut it out with an axe. This instrument seemed to surprise them more than anything else. They could not understand it at all at first ; but, after they had seen it used a few times, nothing would please them so much as to set them to work chopping up firewood. They amused themselves thus for hours together watching the chips fly, laughing and grunting to each other, and conversing in their curious guttural language.

“ I shot in these jungles nearly a month, and then it was that I found what invaluable shekarries the Yanadi tribe make ; for as trackers none equal them. Day by day they acquired more confidence in us, and

and sundry other of my retinue, have been with me for years, and will, I think, stop until the end of the chapter. They all required some little teaching and breaking in at first, but now they know what is to be done, I have very little trouble with them."

"You are somewhat right there," said the Doctor, "and ye certainly have a weel managed household; but there's mair in it than a' that. Flunkies are somewhat like the brute bastes of the field; they know right well when they are kindly treated, and they are easier led than driven, but from certain strange coincidences, this child is of opinion that there is a third party behind the scenes who rules the roast. Tell me, oh, ye Irregular! have ye not a pair o' bright eyes, belonging to some gentle Lallbee, Amirbee, or Zenobee, who has taken a kindly interest in the management o' your affairs for the sake o' the master? or what are ye doing wi' palanquins and covered carts in a bachelor's establishment, when you belong to a moss-trooping order, 'whose word is snaffle, spur, and spear?' Ugh! ugh! ugh!"

"Spare Hal's blushes, and let us adjourn to the Begum's nautch, for I hear the sound of native music in that direction, and I suppose they are only waiting for our attendance to begin," said W——, rising from his chair.

CHAPTER VII.

“ No treacherous powder bids conjecture quake,
 No stiff starched stays make meddling fingers ache ;
 No damsel faints when rather closely pressed,
 But more caressing seems when most caressed.”

BYRON.

THE NAUTCH.

The Nautch: its fascinations.—Indian dancing-girls.—Oriental eyes.—
 Their dress and jewels.—Soaping the Begum.—Indian jugglers and their
 tricks.—The celebrated mango-tree.—The sacrifice to Bowain.—Expla-
 nation.—The Doctor's wonder.

As we entered the garden or compound round the bungalow, we found great preparations had been made for the nautch. The verandah was inclosed all round with fine mat tatties or screens, behind which the Begum and her attendants sat, and through which they could see the performance without being exposed to the gaze of the public. In front were placed about a dozen chairs, the centre ones being left vacant for us, and the others occupied by the native officers of the detachment. In the centre of a large circle of troopers, sepoy, camp-followers, villagers, and attendants, who were seated in rows, on mats placed on the ground, was stretched a large carpet, round which several huge brass candelabra were placed. Overhead a large red and white chamiana was stretched,

sheltering the spectators from any dew that might fall; and in the rear was placed an open tent, containing the musicians, who were about twenty in number.

The instruments consisted of sarindas (a kind of guitar), clarionets, several queer-shaped fiddles, cholera horns (trumpets, about five feet long, shaped like an S), hautboys, tomtoms, dubties, dolkies, and drums of every size and shape; besides small bells, which were used as castanets.

Large brass and wooden trays piled with betel-nut, pawn-leaves, mangoes, oranges, figs, plantains, limes, grapes, melons, pomegranates, custard-apples, and every kind of fruit of the country, were scattered all round, besides cakes and sweetmeats, which were served up *ad lib.* to the spectators.

As we entered the music struck up, and the whole company rose and saluted us, remaining standing until we were seated, and the Begum's black aide-de-camp paid us many compliments on the part of his mistress.

The tinkling of the bangles and gungroos* was now heard, and about forty handsomely-dressed dancing-girls entered the circle, and salaamed gracefully to the company. Half-a-dozen of the youngest and prettiest then stepped forward and placed garlands of double jessamine flowers round our necks, at the same time presenting each of us with a lime and

* Feet-ornaments, and strings of small bells of various tones worn round the ankles when dancing.

a curiously-fashioned bouquet, tied to a short stick of sandal-wood. They then deluged us with rose-water, and scented us with otto of roses and oil of sandal, and tripped away to the rest of the performers in the centre of the circle.

The music, which up to this time had been rather monotonous, now broke forth into that extremely beautiful Persian air, by the immortal Hafiz, "Taza ba Taza, Now ba Now," and each of the fair minstrels, taking up the words of the song one by one, it gradually swelled into a full chorus; so, in a like manner, one by one they commenced their graceful and voluptuous measure until all were in movement, and at last their beautiful sylph-like forms seemed to flit before us as in a vision.

As I reclined upon the sedan, inhaling the fragrant narcotic from my hookah, which at the same time soothes and exhilarates, and drank in the words of the songs, I felt a strange delightfully ravishing sensation stealing gently over my senses, such as I never before experienced; and as I gazed on the graceful, fawn-like carriage of the exquisite figures, cast in the purest mould of elegance, before me, I thought of the prophet's seventh heaven, and the green-kerchiefed damsels who ever attended "*the Faithful*" in Paradise.

Their regular features, soft skins, and full swimming eyes glancing through their soft glossy raven hair, give them, in my eyes, an interest which the colder beauties of northern climates have never raised. Gentle reader, have you ever visited the land of the

sun ? If so, you, too, must have marked that languid, expressive voluptuousness issuing forth from the gazelle-like eyes of her daughters, which you seek for in vain in other less favoured lands. You, too, may have been captivated by some one of the many fair maidens of Hind ; and, perhaps, as you have gazed intensely into the depths of her dark and ever-changing eyes, which, sparkling with their brightness, lovingly refracted back your image, you have felt they have spoken a language your heart has well understood ; and perhaps at such a time, as you have gently put away those thick jet-black and glossy tresses from her fair brow, you have whispered softly in her ear, “ Mera Jan, tera waste mera dil panee ho gia ! ” (My life ! on account of you my heart has become water) ; and when her fond, expressive glance has met your gaze, and she has twined her delicate arms around your neck, you have “ ta’en her answer from her murmuring lips,” and felt, as you pressed her palpitating and yielding form the closer to your bosom, that even the much-lauded beauty of your own loved though far-distant land was cold and tame compared to hers. But I am wandering, and bygone scenes and happy days passed long ago in those fair lands “ flit o’er my mind like blissful summer’s dreams,” and as my thoughts veer back to days of yore and long-lost friends, I feel those bright recollections stealing vividly back to memory like sunny spots and pleasant oases in my varied life’s career.

Mais revenons à nos moutons. The ordinary dancing of the kunchnees (or dancing girls) consists more of different changes of position than any defined step or figure; and in the elegant attitudes and graceful postures with which they advance and retire, the arms, hands, feet, neck, and eyes, moving in unison with the music; and I think they ought rather to be called singing than dancing girls, for it has always appeared to me that their dancing is only a graceful and expletic accompaniment to their songs, which, treating, as they generally do, of love, often assume rather a lascivious character. The interior edges of the eyelids are darkened with "soormah," a preparation of antimony, which heightens their beauty, and gives them a peculiarly fascinating and bewitching appearance.

The nautch has charms which possess a powerful and almost irresistible influence on the affections and passions of the inhabitants of the East, and forms the principal recreation and amusement both with high and low. The European stranger who does not understand the language, and is unacquainted with the habits and customs of the country, may look upon a nautch as a monotonous and unmeaning performance; but to one who can understand and appreciate the beauties of Sadi and Hafiz, it has an inexplicable and alluring charm, and many a live-long night have I passed most delightfully, whilst my regiment was quartered in the Nizam's dominions, in the kiosk (or garden house) of one of my native friends—an Emir

of Hydrabad, where, lulled by the sounds of gurgling waters and flowing fountains, which cooled the air, deliciously impregnated with the fragrance of groves of roses and jessamines, I have remained until grey dawn broke, listening with rapture to the flowery language of the Persian poets, and gazing on the elf-like forms that flitted before me.

The ordinary costume of the Mussulmaunee dancing-girls consists of a "cholee" or boddice, fitting tight to the form, and cut low in front down the breast, with short sleeves. It is generally made of bright-coloured silk, richly embroidered with gold, and is supposed to answer the purpose of stays, corsets, and all such abominable gear with which European damsels are in the habit of distorting their forms into what they call shape, and which must, *I fancy* (I am not a Benedict), prove a considerable obstruction towards their lover's advances; for clasping one of those stiff, whalebone-sided damsels round the waist must give one nearly the same sensations as embracing a lamp-post or a milestone.

The "loonga," similar to the Persian "peshuajh," a richly-embroidered petticoat, is gathered round the waist, and seldom falls far below the knee, showing the graceful swell of the leg and beautifully-turned and slender ankles. Oh! ye fair maidens of the North, with what envy would ye behold the delicate forms of the daughters of "the Faithful," whose full-flowing garments are confined round their naturally taper waists by a silver or gold zone, of less than

eighteen inches in circumference. The "kurtnee," a vest of the finest and most transparent muslin, without sleeves, with the edges richly embroidered, is worn over the "cholee," reaching to the waist. Over all is the "sarree," a bright gauze scarf, often of gold or silver thread, which is passed round the waist, having one end thrown gracefully over the shoulder.

The hair, which is almost always very long and silky, and of raven black, is worn in the Madonna fashion in front, but gathered up in long plaits behind, often falling to the ankles.

The edge of the hair from the centre of the forehead to the back of the head is often adorned with a fringe of seed-pearls, or small gold chains, which hangs parallel to the arch of the eyebrows, and has a beautiful effect on their clear skin. This ornament is also worn to this day by the Jewish women of Constantinople and Syria, and many of their other jewels are of great antiquity, and resemble those described by the prophet Isaiah as having belonged to the daughters of Zion; more particularly "the tinkling ornaments about their feet, and the round tires like the moon, the nose jewels"—which latter ornament is called the "boolaq," and is generally a golden crescent, set with rubies, diamonds, or emeralds, and worn in the cartilage of the nose, through which a hole is bored, falling to the upper lip with very pretty effect.

Round the ankles heavy massive silver or gold "gungroos" are worn, of curious construction, resem-

bling three double curb-chains, to which rows of small fuchsia-shaped bells are attached, of different tones, which jingle as they walk, and with which they keep time to the music when they dance.

Earrings are worn all round the ears, but from the lobes hang beautifully-formed bell-shaped drops, fringed round with seed-pearls.

The neck and arms are covered with all kinds of necklaces, bracelets, armlets, bangles, and silver or gold rings, besides numerous charms and amulets, which are supposed to shield the wearer from misfortune, and to avert the influence of the Evil Eye.

The fingers and even the toes are ornamented with rings, and the nails of both are stained a bright red with "maindee," or the juice of the "henna."

During the nautch several curious feats requiring great suppleness of body were performed. For instance, a row of girls stood fronting us, standing with their feet about six inches apart, between which was placed a rupee, or a needle with the point upright; they then all bent backwards together, and introducing their hands between their feet, picked up the money with their lips, or the needle with their eyelids, regaining their standing position without having moved their feet.

Various kinds of fruits and sweetmeats were handed round to us, the latter having been expressly prepared for us by the Begum herself, as her factotum informed us. As they were really famous in their way, I broke out in a rhapsody, in which I declared "that the

Nawab with the lump on his face was indeed born under a lucky star, and was much to be envied, in spite of the misfortune with which Allah had afflicted him. Was he not to get into his harem the same day a young wife, beautiful as a peri, and a mother-in-law who must have made her studies of the *cuisine* in heaven! The only thing that astonished me was, that the chobadar or gatekeeper ever allowed her to return from the abode of the blessed.”

The Begum, her daughter, and female attendants, could hear everything I said, they being seated on the raised verandah just behind our sedan, a fine mat screen preventing them from being seen; and the old lady took the whole of the compliment to herself, and warmly reproved her followers for tittering at my speech, assuring them all in a very grave manner, that “the Mogli sirdar (Mogul officer) with the long black beard (meaning myself) was a very respectable man, and knew what was what; and that when a man was hungry, a group of peris from heaven would be but a poor exchange for one good cook.”

On hearing this I drew in my breath, gave a deep sigh, and declared “that the gifted woman who was hid from my sight by the cruel screen spoke like a book; and that, although pretty women were as numerous as the hairs of one’s beard, yet an observant man might travel from country to country until his hair was white without finding or even hearing of such a paragon of perfection as she whose hospitality we were then enjoying.”

Just at this moment two jugglers entered the circle, during an interval between the dances; and one of them placed before him a large earthen jar, over the mouth of which a piece of skin was tightly stretched, so as to form a kind of drum, which he beat with two small sticks, keeping time to a curious monotonous song, in which he exhorted his companion to display the utmost of his talents, so as to amuse the noble gentlemen, if he did not wish to eat dirt and have his face blackened.

The other replied that, Fate helping him, he would receive great presents from the truly charitable gentlemen on account of the great feats he would perform; and, after having beaten his breasts and uttered sundry cabalistic incantations, he rummaged in a bag containing the implements of his profession, and produced a queer-shaped doll, which, when touched with his wand, appeared to utter curious squeaks and groans.

This he designated Madras Ramasawmy, and he proceeded to inform us that it was by means of his aid that he was going to amuse us, for that he was a great jadoo-wallah (magician). I noticed, however, that, during the course of the performance, he (the doll) received several cuffs if some of the feats of skill did not succeed the first time.

The juggler then passed round a common-looking white stone for our inspection, and then gave it to a pretty little dancing-girl who was sitting close to me. She closed her hand on it, and, after he had touched

her with his wand, he told her to open it, and it was found full of white sand.

He then called a very black musician, and, removing his turban, made him sit down near him; then taking a pinch of the sand, rubbed it down his forehead, leaving a bright yellow mark. A second pinch produced a blue, a third a red, and so on, every pinch producing a different colour. He then told the girl to close her hand, which he again touched with his wand, and the sand was turned into a small live snake, which the little woman threw down with a loud cry, which awoke the Doctor, who had fallen asleep on his chair near me, and caused him to stretch his legs and arms, and rub his eyes for some time before he knew where he was. "Ugh! ugh! ugh!" he exclaimed, starting to his feet with a grunt of amazement, "I must surely ha' been dreaming, for I thought that auld vixen of a bear was after me, and, ugh! but she was no just a cannie customer, coming tearing and rampaging after a puir body wi' her lugs in th' air, an' her jaws open like a bluid-thirsty cannibal, looking for a' the world as if she thought no more o' swallowing ane o' the faculty than a blue pill. Och, the varmint! but what can you expect when one o' the profession goes black-guarding about the country wi' a real gun in the company of the likes o' ye Irregulars? Ugh! ugh! ugh!"

The juggler then caught the snake, and tapping it with his wand appeared to turn it into a stone again,

which, after having passed round for examination, he swallowed. Then, stroking his stomach, he made us understand that this hard living did not agree with his constitution, but that, with the proceeds of the generosity of the sahib log (gentlemen), he hoped to live well in future, and not to be obliged to make such meals as he had done that morning, the nature and quality of which he proceeded to show us; for, striking his chin with his wand, and opening his mouth, he produced some pounds' weight of pebbles, followed up by a quantity of small shells, then long strings of paper of different colours, and finishing off by ejecting a huge black scorpion all alive, round which he danced, testifying his joy, as he proceeded gravely to explain to us that this bold reptile having got into his stomach in some water which he had drank from a well on which the Evil Eye had fallen, he had had no peace ever since, as it devoured all the food he put into his stomach, and prevented his appetite ever being satisfied.

He now handed round for our inspection a dry mango-stone, which he afterwards buried in the ground, muttering imprecations against all evil spirits as he did so, and pouring a little water over the spot, which he assured us came from the blessed Ganges.

He then produced a small stone image of the goddess Bowanee,* to which he prayed that he might

* Bowanee or Kalee—the Hindoo goddess of destruction, the deity of the Thugs.

live to eat of the fruit of the tree of which he had just planted the seed. Immediately afterwards he dug up the stone, and finding it in the same state as when he had buried it, pretended to be in a great rage, and commenced abusing the goddess in not very measured terms, revealing certain antecedents to her memory which, if true, did not speak much in favour of the general morality of the Hindoo divinities. His ire even led him to forget common politeness to the sex, for he struck her repeatedly with his wand, but finished off by promising to break cocoa-nuts in her name, provided she assisted him to please the gentlemen; and after having effected a reconciliation, he again dug up the seed and showed it to us, with little white germs growing out of one end.

He again buried it, and recommenced coaxing the image to assist him, promising to sacrifice a cock to her, provided she listened graciously to his prayer, then covering the spot with a basket, to prevent the influence of any evil spirit from interfering with the working of his spell; in the meantime he showed us some very clever sleight-of-hand tricks with cups and small cloth balls, something like thimble-rig.

When this was over he removed the basket and showed us a young mango-plant growing, it having put forward the two first leaves; and at our request he dug it up from the ground and showed us the roots with the stone still adhering to them. This he

again planted and covered it over with the basket, after which he showed us some very clever juggling with knives and balls.

When he again uncovered the plant it was covered with blossom, which we examined carefully before the basket was replaced.

He then showed us a very interesting feat, in which there was really no deception. He made his comrade lie down on his back, and placed on his bare stomach a double betel-leaf; then, taking a sharp sword, he made a ferocious drawing cut, entirely dividing the leaf and making a line on the man's stomach, yet not dividing the skin. He then placed a lime on the palm of a man's hand, and cut it in two with a stroke, so that both halves fell on the ground, making a mark with the edge of the sword on the man's hand, yet not cutting the skin.

When this feat was ended he asked the Doctor to remove the basket, and when he did so, lo! and behold, the tree was bending from the weight of five fine mangoes, which were plucked and offered for our inspection.

The performance was deservedly much applauded, but the operator was looked upon with much distrust and suspicion by the natives, who imagined he did everything by supernatural agency; for when I cut the mango he presented to me and offered half of it to the little Mussulmaunee girl who sat at my feet, she actually shuddered as she put it away from her, begging me in the name of Allah not to eat any of it,

as it could not be otherwise than bad, coming from such a source.

I however ate it, and found it very good, though I could not persuade any of the natives to taste it.

The next trick was also exceedingly good, and merits description. He crouched down before the stone image of the goddess, and, making a most profound obeisance, thanked her for the favour he had found in the eyes of the honourable company then assembled, and declared himself her most humble votary from that moment; and in confirmation of which solemn vow he declared that he would immediately sacrifice his only daughter, and henceforward devote himself to her service. He told his intentions to a beautiful little girl, about six years old, who was sitting near, and she began to cry and struggle in a most natural manner; but he seized her, and, after stripping off all her jewels and upper clothing, and loosening her long black hair, which fell over her little naked breast and shoulders, deliberately bound her hands and feet, covering her with a thick black veil.

He then swept the ground, on which he sprinkled some of the holy Ganges water, and, laying her down, covered her with the basket he had used with the mango trick, spreading a white cloth over all. He then commenced a prayer to the goddess Bowanee, prostrating himself before the stone image and invoking its aid, and finished by breaking a coconut as a sacrifice, and placing the pieces before it.

Then breaking out into a long, wild cry, he rolled his eyes, foamed at the mouth like a maniac, and seizing a double-edged sword plunged it into the centre of the cloth, through the basket under which he had placed his child, repeating the stroke twice in different places. Dark streams of blood were seen running from underneath the cloth, the sword being also stained; and at each blow shrieks and groans appeared to rise from under the basket. For a moment all was still, and every face transfixed with horror at the supposed crime; loud murmurs were heard among the men, and cries of alarm arose among the females, who rushed wildly about, screaming and beating their breasts; then the juggler coolly made an obeisance to the idol, and lifting up the bloody cloth and basket, displayed to the excited spectators only the veil, pierced in three places, and the cord with which the child was bound. The child had vanished.

All were thunderstruck, and some of the bystanders seized the juggler and threatened him with their vengeance if he did not restore the child he had spirited away by magic. He shook them off, and bowing again to the image, called thrice the name of Chandbee, and the little girl came tripping in from somewhere outside the circle and embraced her father. Our applause was long and loud, and when the little maid went round with the plate, the numerous donations placed upon it announced the satisfaction of all the spectators.

The old Doctor, who had been rubbing his eyes, and twisting himself uncomfortably in his chair for some time, now burst out into a dolorous grunt, and with a serio-comic expression of countenance exclaimed, "Ugh! ugh! ugh! Weel! weel! Dinna ye believe in the deil and a' his works noo, as yere catechism says? but I reckon that was no a part o' the bringing up o' the likes o' ye. But, oh! dear mon, was it no just a fearfu' sight? This chiel felt his e'en maist greeting, an' his temples bursting, when the auld heathen streck'd his gullie wi' sic a like thud into his sonsie little bairn as coolly as if he was opening a haggis, and she just felt as if she couldna thole it; for brimstane smelt right strong, as the auld bleezin' hornie went down on his marrow-banes to the little ne'er-do-well stane kelpie; and whilst the carle was in that position this half-scared infant just peeped twice at his nether end so as to mak' sure there was no dark, ill-looking appendage attached or hid in the folds o' his cloth."

"It was a magnificent trick," said W——, "for though I knew what was to follow, having seen it before, and studiously watched every motion, I have not gained the slightest clue towards finding it out, and I cannot understand it at all."

"It was certainly an extraordinary deception," I replied, "but the mango trick puzzles me most. I have a shrewd suspicion that I know how the child vanished from under the basket, although I must confess that I did not see it move; but do you not

remember that, when he struck the first blow through the cloth and drew out the sword reeking with blood, several women rushed frantically round with shrieks and cries of horror, causing some confusion : well, I imagine that at this time the child must have crept from under the basket, and slipped away concealed under the flowing drapery of a female accomplice. I remember I fancied the outrageous grief of one old Mussulmaunee woman was got up for the occasion to divert our attention, for I noticed that, although she was wailing and beating her breasts most vehemently, no tears fell, and she raised her hand and put a piece of betel-nut and a paun-leaf into her mouth, which action impressed me with the idea that she was a confederate, and that her grief was ‘all my eye.’”

“It must have been as you say,” says Jock, “if Sawbones’ friend, ‘Old Hornie,’ did not play a part in the performance, which, in my eyes, at first bordered on the supernatural, I must confess.”

The jugglers then withdrew, and the nautch continued until the grey of the morning, when our rising from our seats was the signal for the sports to cease, and the spectators to retire.

We, the European officers, having distributed our largess to the dancing-girls, proceeded to a tent close by, where a handsome native supper was served in the Mussulman style of cooking, and here we remained chatting and smoking our hookahs until intimation was given us that the sun had risen, when each retired to his tent.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Why, what should be the fear ?
I do not set my life at a pin’s fee.”

HENRY IV.

THE DEATH OF THE MAN-EATER.

News of the man-eater again.—We are once more on his trail.—The scent lost.—Googooloo gives tongue.—It warms.—My plan.—Preparation.—Execution.—A ticklish moment.—Death of the man-eater.—Ceremonies of the Shekarries.

As I was preparing to turn in for an hour or two, my head shekarry, Chineah, came up grinning, and told me that the patel of the village of Botta Singarum had sent to say that the tiger had been seen skulking near the outskirts of the village a short time after our return to camp.

I immediately sent for the dhoby and Kistimah, and despatched them, with Chineah and the gang with my guns, to the village, to find out all the particulars ; and, having questioned the villager who brought the message rather closely, for I had some doubts as to the truth of the report, I appointed a place of meeting, and after a couple of hours’ repose, a bath, and a hurried breakfast, I mounted my nag without disturbing the other officers, who were still sleeping, and joined my people at the Botta Singarum police-station.

Without dismounting, I went, guided by a villager, to the place where the tiger had been seen the evening before, and there I found unmistakable signs of his presence, as the pugs were plainly visible.

I sent my horse back to the village, and, accompanied by the gang, followed his track through a narrow ravine densely wooded.

Here the trail became exceedingly difficult to follow, as the brute had evidently been walking about backwards and forwards in the bed and along the banks of a dry nullah, and we could not distinguish his last trail.

I caused the band to separate, and for half an hour or so we were wandering about as if in a maze, for the cunning brute had been describing circles, and often, by following the trail, we arrived at the place we started from.

Whilst we were all at a loss, suddenly I heard a low "Coo" twice repeated, and I knew that Googooloo, who was seldom at fault, was now on warm scent, and from his call I was as certain that the game was a-foot as any master of hounds would have been, while breaking cover, to hear his favourite dog give tongue.

The gang closed up, and, guided by the sound, we made our way through thick bush to where Googooloo was standing by a pool of water in the bed of the nullah.

Here were unmistakable marks of his having quenched his thirst quite lately, for when we came

up the water was still flowing into the deeply-imprinted pugs of his fore-feet, which were close to the edge of the pool ; and I noticed that the water had still the appearance of having been disturbed and troubled.

After having drunk, the brute had made his way to some very thick jungle, much overgrown with creepers, through which we could not follow without the aid of our axes.

Thus, stalking with any hope of success was out of the question, so I held a solemn consultation with Kistimah, Chineah, Googooloo, and the dhoby, as to the best means of proceeding.

I felt convinced that the brute was still lurking somewhere near at hand in the jungle, for, besides the very recent trail we were on, I fancied I heard the yelling of a swarm of monkeys, which I attributed to their having been frightened by his appearance ; besides, this was just the kind of place that a tiger would be likely to remain in during the heat of the day, as it afforded cool shade from the sun, and water.

All the gang were of my opinion, and Kistimah observed that, on two different occasions, after a post-runner had been carried off, he had remarked that the trail of the tiger led from this part of the jungle to a bend in the road, where he had been known frequently to lie in wait for his prey.

“ These man-eaters,” added he “ are great devils, and very cunning, and I should not at all wonder

if even now he was watching us from some dark thicket."

As he said this I carefully examined the caps of my rifle, and I observed some of the gang close up with a strange shudder, for this brute had inspired them all with a wholesome fear, and prevented their straggling. Two or three spoke almost in whispers, as if they were afraid of his really being sufficiently near to hear them conspiring for his destruction.

At length Kistimah said that he had been thinking of a plan which, though dangerous in the execution, might be attended with success. It was for me to go, with a man dressed as a runner, down the main road at sunset, being the time the tiger generally carried off his victims, and to run the chance of getting a shot.

At this proposition sundry interjectional expressions, such as "Abah!" "Arrez!" "Toba!" "Toba!" escaped from the lips of the bystanders, and, from sundry shaking of heads and other unmistakable signs, I could see that it had not found much favour in their eyes. Chineah, the dhoby, and one or two of the gang, however, approved of the plan, and Kistimah offered to accompany me as the post-runner.

This, however, I objected to, for I thought that I should have a better chance of meeting the tiger if I went alone than in company; besides, I preferred having only myself to look after. The plan of action once settled, I returned to the village and obtained

from the patel the bamboo on which the tappal-runners sling the mail-bags over their shoulders. To the end of this is an iron ring with a number of small pieces of metal attached, making a jingling noise as the man runs, which gives warning of the coming of the post to any crowd that might be obstructing the path, allowing them time to get out of his way. Having broken off the ring, I fastened it to my belt, so as to allow it to jingle as I walked; and, arming myself with a short double rifle by Westley Richards, a brace of pistols, and a huge shekar knife, I made Kistimah lead the way down the road towards the place where the man-eater was said to lurk.

About a mile from the village I made the gang and the villagers who accompanied me halt, and went on with Kistimah, Chineah, and Googooloo to reconnoitre the ground.

The road was intersected by a narrow valley or ravine, along the bottom of which was a dry, sandy watercourse, the banks of which were overgrown with high rank grass and reeds, intermixed with low scrubby thorn-bushes. To the left was a low, rocky hill, in some places bare and in others covered with thick jungle, with wild date or custard-apple clumps here and there.

Kistimah pointed me out a clump of rather thick jungle to the right of the road, where, he said, the tiger often lurked whilst on the look-out for his prey, and here we saw two or three old trails. He also

showed me a rock from behind which the brute had sprung on a post-runner some weeks before, but we saw no signs of his having been there lately.

It was, however, quite what an Indian sportsman would have termed "a tigerish spot," for bold scarped rocks and naked fantastic peaks rose in every direction from amongst the dense foliage of the surrounding jungle. Here and there noble forest-trees towered like giant patriarchs above the lower verdure of every shade and colour.

Not a breath of air was stirring, nor a leaf moving; and as the sun was still high up, without a cloud to be seen to intercept his rays, the heat was most oppressive, and respiration even was becoming difficult, on account of a peculiar closeness arising from the decayed vegetation under-foot, and the overpowering perfume of the blossoms of certain jungle plants.

After having reconnoitred the country I felt rather overcome with lassitude, and returned to the rest of the gang, whom I found sleeping in a clump of deep jungle, a little off the road-side. Here I lay down to rest, protected from the piercing rays of the sun by the shade of a beautiful natural bower formed by two trees, which were bent down with the weight of an immense mass of various kinds of parasitical plants, in addition to their own foliage.

The mournful silence and strange stillness that reigned was only broken at times by the distant scream of peafowl, or the shrill crowing of a jungle-

cock, who, unsuspicious of our presence, was scratching up the ground and clacking to his hens in an adjoining thicket. The shrill and peculiarly wild notes of these birds seem as if they were ordained by Nature to accord with the calm, still solitude and sublime grandeur of scenery of "the deep jungle." They inhabit that deep jungle of which Ferishta says truly, "that death dwells in the water and poison in the breeze; where the grass is tough as the teeth of serpents, and the air fetid as the breath of dragons." For so it is: the deadliest fevers lurk in those places most beautiful to the eye, the air being poisoned and impregnated by the exhalations of decayed leaves and other decomposed vegetable matter.

I must have slept several hours, for when I awoke I found the sun sinking low in the horizon; however, I got up considerably refreshed for my nap, and, giving myself a shake, prepared for the task I had undertaken.

I carefully examined my arms, and, having ascertained that nothing had been seen by any of my gang, some of whom had kept a look-out, I told my people to listen for the sound of my gun, which, if they heard, they might come up, otherwise that they were to remain quiet until my return.

I ordered Chineah, Kistimah, Googooloo, and the dhoby to accompany me down the road with spare guns, in case I might want them, and when I arrived at a spot which commanded a view of the ravine I sent them to climb different trees.

Kistmah begged hard to be allowed to accompany me, as he said this tiger never attacked a man in front but always from behind; but I would not permit him, as I thought that two people would perhaps scare the animal, and his footsteps might prevent me from hearing any sound intimating his approach.

The sun had almost set as I proceeded slowly down the road, and, although I was perfectly cool and as steady as possible, I felt cold drops of perspiration start from my forehead as I approached the spot where so many victims had been sacrificed. I passed the rock, keeping well on the look-out, listening carefully for the slightest sound, and I remember feeling considerably annoyed by the chirping made by a couple of little bulbuls (Indian nightingales), that were fighting in a bush close to the roadside. Partridges were calling loudly all around, and as I passed the watercourse I saw a jackal skulking along its bed. I stopped, shook my jingling affair, and listened several times as I went along, but to no purpose.

Whilst ascending the opposite side of the ravine I heard a slight noise like the crackling of a dry leaf: I paused, and turning to the left fronted the spot from whence I thought the noise proceeded. I distinctly saw a movement or waving in the high grass, as if something was making its way towards me: then I heard a loud purring sound, and saw something twitching backwards and forwards behind a clump of low bush and long grass, about eight or ten paces from me, and a little in the rear. It was a ticklish

moment, but I felt prepared. I stepped back a couple of paces, in order to get a better view, which action probably saved my life, for immediately the brute sprang into the middle of the road, alighting about six feet from the place where I was standing. I fired a hurried shot ere he could gather himself up for another spring, and when the smoke cleared away I saw him rolling over and over in the dusty road, writhing in his death agony, for my shot had entered the neck and gone downwards into his chest. I stepped on one side and gave him my second barrel behind the ear, when dark blood rushed from his nostrils, a slight tremor passed over all his limbs, and all was still. The man-eater was dead, and his victims avenged.

My gang, attracted by the sound of my shots, came rushing up almost breathless, and long and loud were the rejoicings when the tiger was recognised by Kistimah as the cunning man-eater who had been the scourge of the surrounding country for months.

He was covered with mange, and had but little hair left on his skin, which was of a reddish brown colour, and not worth taking. I made Chineah cut off the right paw with his axe, and sent a post-runner into camp with it to announce my success. A bullock-cart was then fetched from the village, on which the carcass was with much difficulty hoisted, and dragged off in triumph by the villagers, for the bullocks were so frightened by his smell that they would not allow

themselves to be harnessed to the cart ; all force and coaxing being in vain to get them sufficiently near to place the yokes on their necks.

All the villagers turned out to witness our entry, poojahs (religious ceremonies) were performed, sheep and cocks sacrificed, and prayers offered up to sundry Sawmies (Hindoo gods) in my name. I was the centre of attraction of all the young girls of the village, whose dark sparkling eyes flashed kindly on me as they stood waving their hands on either side of the road. As for the old women, I really had some difficulty to get out of their clutches ; they kissed the hem of my old green baize shooting-coat, cracked their knuckles over my forehead for luck, stroked my face and beard, patted me on the back, and at last became so vehement in their attentions that I had to beg of my gang to keep them off.

All the men in the village turned out with torches and firesticks to escort me home to camp. Rockets and fireworks were burnt, matchlocks discharged, and tomtoms, dubties, and cholera horns poured forth their notes of triumph before the dead tiger, whose head was carried in the front on a spear.

My gang marched at the head of the procession, and five ancient dancing-girls from the village were pirouetting before the cart, howling and yelling as they whirled on the "light fantastic," in such a manner that they reminded one strongly of the witch scene in Macbeth. The whole camp turned out to view the carcass of the man-eater, and many were

the congratulations I received from all parties that evening.

I gave a few sheep and fowls to my gang, with some rackee, and throughout the night "there was a sound of revelry." The next day the mutilated carcass was paraded on a cart in all the neighbouring villages by Kistimah and the dhoby, who, by levying contributions either in coin or kind, realized a little fortune for themselves.

I have killed many tigers both before and since, but I never met with such a determined enemy to mankind, for he was supposed to have carried off more than a hundred individuals. He fully exemplified an old Indian saying, "that when a tiger has once tasted human blood he will never follow other game, men proving an easier prey." On the spot where the tiger was killed a large mausoleum now stands, caused by the passers-by each throwing a stone until a large heap is formed. Since that day many a traveller who has passed that way has been entertained by the old pensioned sepoy who is in charge of the public bungalow, with a long account of the death of the celebrated Admee Khanna-wallah (Man-eater), and old friends have told me that many anxious and kind inquiries have been made as to the health and welfare of the black-bearded cavalry officer who slew him.

SECTION II.—SOUTHERN INDIA.

CHAPTER IX.

TRICHINOPOLY.

Trichinopoly.—The evil influence of caste in India.—The return of Chincah, and our prospects of sport.—My shooting-cart and battery described.—Preparations for a start.

I WAS quartered for some time at Trichinopoly, one of the dullest of our military stations in Southern India, which city certain learned authorities aver has only a single sheet of brown paper between it and the infernal regions. Every Anglo-Indian will tell you that it is famous for three things—viz., magnificent snipe-shooting, unrivalled cheroots, and delicate and exquisitely wrought gold-chains.

Trichy (short for Trichinopoly), like most other Indian cities, possesses a stone citadel, formerly an old pagoda, built on an almost inaccessible rock, which rises isolated out of the plain and commands the neighbouring country. This is surrounded by a pettah or native town, fortified by double bastioned walls of solid masonry, a deep ditch (which can be filled from the Cauvery, that flows at a short distance from the northern face), a covert-way and glacis.



On Stone by L. Law

from a Sketch by T. H. I.

THE DEATH OF A BULL BISON.



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This place was the scene of some severe fighting in the year 1753, when the French attempted to assault the place by surprise without success. Within the walls are the ruins of a handsome palace, which was formerly the habitation of Ameer al Oomra, also several Mussulman mosques, and Hindoo pagodas, dedicated to divers Sawmies (images) of uncouth appearance and very questionable character, if we are to believe the history of their lives, which is generally carved on the exterior of their temples. The mainguard, commanded by a European officer, is in one of the principal gateways of the fort, which also contains an arsenal (formerly an old pagoda), barracks, magazines, storehouses, and a well-stocked bazaar, in which everything may be bought, from a handspike to an elephant. Outside of the walls are extensive suburbs, and at a short distance is the military cantonment, where are quartered a European regiment of foot, either of Her Majesty's or the East India Company's service; a regiment of Native Light Cavalry, some Artillery, and three battalions of Native Infantry.

Trichinopoly is situated on the south bank of the river Cauvery, and is considered a holy city by the Hindoos, being to the Madras Presidency what Benares is to the Bengal. Almost opposite the town, upon an island formed by the division of the stream, is the celebrated temple of Seringam, the outside wall of which contains an area of more than a mile square. It is the very hotbed of Brahminism, and

here congregate from all parts of the south of India those fat, lazy, greasy cumberers of the earth, who live upon clover, by the sweat of other men's brows, and thrive and grow rich upon the offerings which they wring from poor deluded Hindoo pilgrims by working upon their credulity and superstitious fears.

It was in the latter end of the month of April, and our old stagers declared they had never felt anything like the heat. We were all nearly baked, and, as old Paddy S——, of the —th, used to say, "looked like carefully dried resuscitated mummies;" for our faces were burnt almost coffee-colour from constant exposure to the sun whilst out snipe-shooting.

I felt thoroughly disgusted and worn-out with the changeless monotony of an Indian garrison life, and was heartily sick of parades, drills, guard-mountings, inspections, courts-martial, courts of inquest, inquiry, request, committees, meetings, and boards of every kind. Mainguard and regimental duty seemed to come round oftener than usual, and nothing was stirring except the mosquitos, which are one of the plagues of India, and those of Trichy are celebrated as galley-nippers.

I was sitting, after dinner one evening, in the veranda of the mess-house, conversing with three or four of my brother officers, listening to the regimental band, and cogitating upon the vapid life I was leading, when suddenly my chochra (a young mussulman lad, whose office it was to assist me to dress and wait at table) rushed up with frantic haste, exclaim-

ing "Sahib, sahib, Chineah iya hy!" (Sir, sir, Chineah has come!) Now Chineah was my head shekarry or huntsman, who had been out on a reconnoitring expedition after large game, and a great man in my establishment.

"Let us have him in at once," said B——, "and hear where he has been, and what shekar-khubber (hunting news) he has brought."

So Chineah was sent for, and in a few minutes was salaaming before us.

"Well, Chineah," said I "what great news have you brought, that you have been away so long? From not having heard from you, I have been expecting you back every day for the last fortnight, and at last began to imagine that some accident had happened, for three or four of your women came up to me declaring that they had heard in the bazaar that you had been eaten by a tiger."

"Women no good, master," answered he, "tell plenty lies, go too much to the bazaar; plenty, plenty talking, never do any work. I go away nearly two months, then come home, find no cloth in go-down,* no rice, no nuffin. To-morrow make plenty bobbyery (noise), plenty floggee. Ah, sahib! karree log kuch fida na (Ah, sir! women-kind are of no good)."

"Never mind them," replied I, "let us hear what news of game you have brought, for B—— sahib and I are going out on a shekar trip in the course of a few days, and we want to hear what our chances are."

* Go-down—servants' quarters, generally out-offices.

“ Well, sahib master knows very well I went to Putchee Mullah and Koolee Mullah Hills, where I only see a few chetel (spotted deer), so I went on to Salem, and on the sides of the Sheveroy Hills I saw some sambur, chetel, and old trail of jungle bice (bison). I stop at Mulliarry village, five, six days, and there I meet one man, Naga, very good shekarry, so I bring with me ; suppose master want other shekar man. This man tell me that there plenty shekar got in Bowani Jungle, so I go there with him, and all over the Combei Jungle, where I see plenty janwars (wild beasts). There got tigers, panthers, bears, bison, elk, spotted deer, and antelopes, and near the Hassanoor Pass I saw plenty old marks of elephant and some nilghau (literally, blue cow). Suppose master go to Bowani, get plenty good shekar. Naga knows that jungle very well ; and I tell all Mulcher men (a jungle tribe) that master coming soon ; and suppose master get plenty shooting, Mulcher men get plenty, plenty bucksheesh (presents).”

“ Well, Chineah,” said I, “ you have done your work very well, and in the course of a few days, inshallah (please God), we shall try our luck in that part of the country. Now go to Yacoob-Khan, and tell him to give you a gold mohur * for yourself and the gang to make merry with, but take care none of you get into trouble ; for if any of you find your way into *chokee* (quod) and are brought up before the gora

* A gold coin worth thirty shillings.

sahib (white gentleman, a name often given to the European magistrate), I shall ask him not to fine you, but to take the change out of your backs."

"Me nebber want to see that gentleman till me goes to 'Jehanum,' "* exclaimed Chineah, as he withdrew, grinning and showing his teeth—"him no good,"

"Well, B——," said I, "I do not think we can do better than try the Bowani Jungle, for I anticipate good sport from Chineah's account of the country, which you may rely upon is correct, as he has been with me a long time, and I have never yet found him deceive me. I shall go at once to H——, and ask him to forward my application for two months' leave of absence, and I will then ask the general to give me permission to start at once, in anticipation of leave from army head-quarters."

I found Major H——, who was then commanding the regiment, in conversation with old S—— of the Commissariat, and he consented at once to forward my application, at the same time telling me that he had no doubt but that it would be granted.

The next three days were devoted to preparations for my sporting campaign, which I shall describe for the benefit of the uninitiated.

I had constructed, according to my own plan and fancy, what I should advise every Indian sportsman to possess—that is, a very comfortable teak-wood bullock-cart, on springs, and fitted up for travelling.

* Jehanum—"the infernal regions."

Mine was seven feet long by four broad, and contained three large water-tight boxes or compartments, to hold my kit and comestibles *en route*, with a fourth, copper-lined and fitted with a screw-top, which fastened with a lock, for my ammunition, besides a rack for eight guns. The wooden sides were about two feet and a half in height, and from them sprang six bamboo hoops, on which the white painted canvas top was extended ; the whole of which gear was moveable, and could be cleared away at a moment's notice. The bottom of the cart was slightly bevelled off round, caulked and sheathed with copper, so that, by taking out the linchpins and putting the wheels into the cart, my trap served me as a boat to transfer myself and goods across rivers otherwise impassable. When in cantonment I took out the pole and bullock-yoke, and fitted in a pair of shafts ; and although it was not a very light vehicle, an old Australian mare I had used to trot along with it with great ease. The whole length of the bottom of the cart was fitted with a hair mattress, and the sides were well padded, so that I managed, when travelling, to get along pretty comfortably.

With posted bullocks I could generally average about four miles an hour ; and, as I halted only during the heat of the day, I managed to get over the ground pretty quickly for India.

My battery, on which I prided myself very much, consisted of a brace of ten-gauge rifles by Purday ; a double rifle and two smooth-bores eight-gauge, by

Westley Richards; a double rifle, by Burrows of Preston; two fowling-pieces, sixteen-bore; a Purday and a long Joe Manton, both clipping shot-guns; a long fore-bore duck-gun by Fullard (after a single discharge of which I have picked up seventeen duck and teal); and a German pea-rifle.

A large Yankee backwoodsman's axe, a couple of bill-hooks, an adze, and other tools, were fitted against the side of my cart, so as to be ready at hand in case of a break-down, which is an event of frequent occurrence in Indian travelling. An obstreperous bullock or a careless driver is very liable to smash a pole or a yoke *en route*; and, in many parts of the country where game abounds, village smiths are difficult to be met with, and I have often been saved hours, and even days' delay, by having the means of repairing them at hand.

A well-supplied medicine-chest, in which the quinine-bottle loomed very large, was carefully stowed away in one of the compartments—a very necessary precaution in a country where disease makes such rapid progress. Besides having often found this chest extremely useful, the mere fact of having it with me inspired my people with confidence, and overcame their fear of the malaria of the dense jungle.

My supplies consisted chiefly of tea, coffee, sugar, spices, curry stuff, brandy, tobacco, biscuits, and kiln-dried flour (country flour will not keep). As bread soon gets dry and spoils in a hot climate, I used to prepare a kind of rusk for travelling, by cutting up

loaves in small pieces, and having them baked until they became of a light brown colour. Prepared in this way, if they are carefully kept in tin cases, they remain fresh and palatable for many weeks, and are a great improvement upon Indian biscuits for breakfast.

My boy was very clever in preparing chapaties or hoppers, which are a kind of girdle-cake baked on an iron plate, and generally made of rice-flour. The materials being always to be procured, even in the smallest village, these cakes are much used in India as a substitute for bread.

My time for three days was occupied in preparing for the trip, hiring coolies, and superintending the casting of bullets for my different guns. In case of meeting with elephants I had some brass bullets cast, besides others, which I now infinitely prefer, made of a mixture of lead and zinc. Bullets of this material are much heavier than if they were made of brass, and are sufficiently hard for any purpose. I generally put in one-third of zinc to two of lead; and often, when I could not get zinc, I have used tin in the same proportion, which I found equally good.

For my large smooth-bores I used round balls, and generally put a couple in my second barrel; for, although I have frequently heard people animadvert upon this practice as dangerous, I never found any evil effects resulting from it: nor are the guns shaken, although I have used them upwards of a dozen years, generally firing from four to five drachms

of powder. For close shooting (when I have a gun by a maker whom I can depend upon) I prefer to have a brace of balls in my second barrel; and although I do not advocate this as a principle, I have found it more effectual in stopping the charge of an infuriated wounded animal.

I may, however, observe, that I go to a good gun-maker, pay a fair price, and see that I get a first-class article for my money. I have always found it cheaper in the end to have a first-class arm, and I think that success in the field often depends upon the degree of confidence which is placed in the guns.

Having given some account of my shooting-cart and battery, I shall go on to describe the rest of my equipment, as perhaps a few wrinkles on the proper dress for a sportsman might be useful to young hands.

The first great rule to be observed is to have all your dress as nearly as possible of the same colour as the general aspect of the country you are going to shoot over. Thus, when you are deer-stalking, or tracking large game in woods before the leaf has fallen, green is the best colour; when the trees are bare, dark brown, the colour of the trunk and branches; are you after antelope on the plain, or ibex among the rocks?—drab is the best colour. Should you be waging war against the grisly bear or ibex in the snow, you would be able to get much nearer to your game unobserved if you, as I have done, wore a shirt outside. Even in duck-shooting on the coast of

England, in winter, you stand a much better chance of making a heavy bag if you follow this plan of dressing.

The second rule is, having all your clothes made to fit well. The most convenient costume for large-game shooting is a long jacket, reaching a little over the hips, with pockets outside, and sleeves like a shirt, fastening at the wrist with a couple of buttons. It should be loosely made, so as to allow the greatest ease and freedom to the limbs. A long waistcoat, with pockets, and breeches fitting loosely over the knee, but rather tightly over the calf.

The gaiters, which I like to fasten with leather buttons down the outside, should fit tightly to the leg and well over the boots. The best material to have them made from is corduroy, fustian, or mole-skin, when you cannot get properly dressed deerskin.

I always found laced-up ankle-boots of deerskin the most comfortable wear for hard fagging, and I prefer substantial single soles, double ones being too heavy to run in.

A leather hunting-cap is the best protection to the head for large-game shooting in the jungles of India, and I prefer to have peaks both before and behind, as the one saves the eyes and face from thorns, and the other prevents anything from falling down the back of your neck. In jungles where the tree-leech abounds this is a great consideration, for those animals often drop from the branches as you shake them in passing, and alight upon your person, when

they seem all to make for the back of your neck by instinct. When in such jungles it is absolutely necessary to wear leech-gaiters, or long, closely-woven cotton stockings, over your socks (which should be of lambswool), under your boots and gaiters and over your breeches, as far as they will go. Even with this safeguard I have sometimes found my boots and stockings drenched with blood in the evening though I could not ascertain how they got in.

I found velveteen, corduroy, or moleskin, the most comfortable for wear whilst out after large game, and I had entire suits made of different colours, so as to suit the ground I was going to shoot over.

Round my waist I always wore a stout, broad leather-belt, with an iron ring substantially fastened at the back, to which I could fasten a strong silk cord. This I found of great use as a safeguard in case of having to descend any steep slope or narrow ledge of rock when in the pursuit of game.

In my belt I carried a small double-barrelled pistol (a revolver would have been preferable), a double field-glass, a small pouch for ammunition, a leather case containing flint, steel, and tinder, and a straight double-edged hunting-knife, which, with the glass and pistol, had small rings attached, so as to enable me to fasten them by thin cords to my belt, to prevent their being lost.

In my pocket I carried a pricker, a nipple wrench, turnscrew, spare nipples, and a little instrument for filling the nipples with fresh powder.

Chineah, my head shekarry, carried a telescope, by Dollond, and a brandy flask, slung over his shoulders, a shekar knife, and small axe in his belt, and my favourite rifle, with its ammunition. Besides which, he always managed to stow away for me a pair of clean socks, which I found a great luxury after a severe fag.

Googooloo, who was my best tracker, always kept at my heels, with my second gun, and carried in his belt a knife, a bill-hook for cutting the way through thick jungle, and a few rounds of ammunition.

Mootoo (short for Choury Mootoo), Veerapah, Narinah, and Rungasawmy, trackers, each carried a spare gun with its ammunition, and a knife with a saw, bill-hook, or axe, in his belt.

Ramasawmy (a preparer of skins) carried a large backwoodsman's axe, as well as the implements of his profession, and Perriatumbee, who usually went by the abbreviation of "the Gooroo," on account of his having some pretensions to priestcraft, carried a large leather "*mushuk*," or skin containing water.

To Naga, the Mulliarry whom Chineah had enlisted in his late reconnaissance, I entrusted a gun, and furnished him with the bill-hook and short spear, with which weapons all my people were armed, as they served not only as a protection, in case any of them were detached, but also as a kind of badge which showed they belonged to the shekar gang. Besides my own regular shekarries, I engaged four coolies to

carry my traps through jungle-paths where carts or ponies could not go.

I had given orders to my head servant to see that every man was provided with a new pair of "chupples," or sandals, a dark "langooty" or waist-cloth, and a "combley jule" or country blanket, made of coarse wool, as I could not afford to have any of them laid up with sore feet or illness; and the day before they were to start I had an inspection parade, at which each man appeared in his new togs, equipped for the road.

B—— did the same with his followers, and we had our tents pitched, our horses and dogs picketed, and our coolies, baggage-ponies, and bullocks examined, so that we might be certain that nothing requisite was left behind, and everything in order.

We had a large double tent for ourselves, whilst *en route*, fitted with cuscus-grass tatties, a hill-tent and a bachoba (a tent without pole) for jungle work, two bell-tents for our people, and a large "shamiana," or canvas screen, to sling between trees or fasten on poles, so as to shelter our horses from the intense heat of the mid-day sun.

My stud consisted of two Arabs (first-rate horses for cross-country after hog), "Gooty," a Mahratta shooting-pony, who could do everything but speak, and an Australian mare, which I generally rode on the march, and sometimes, when the road was good, drove in the cart. B—— had two horses and two ponies, and we had besides hired four baggage-

tattoos and four carriage-bullocks for our tents and baggage.

My servants, who were almost all Mussulmen, consisted of Yacoob Khan, my head man, "Five Minutes," my cook, Hassan, a hooka-badar, Cassim Bey, and Lall Khan, two youngsters who waited at table and helped me to dress, a waterman, a tent-Lascar, four "syces" or grooms, four grass-cutters, two dog-boys, and two soldiers, who, in cantonment, were supposed to keep my regimentals in order, but when on a shekar expedition made themselves generally useful.

B——'s followers numbered more than a dozen, so that altogether the gang, our servants, coolies, and camp-followers, amounted to about forty individuals.

They all paraded in marching trim, to receive a small advance of pay to be left with their families, and I gave them a trifle to be expended in making caste ceremonies, and offering Poojahs to their favourite deities, so that each might propitiate his Sawmy for good luck on the expedition.

The Gooroo rendered himself very conspicuous by killing a sheep in front on an image of Cajasouramardanam (the god of Hunting) who is represented with four arms, having a lance in two hands and curious reptiles in the others, clad in a tiger's skin, and seated upon that of an elephant.

CHAPTER X.

THE SHEVEROYS.

Departure of the gang.—Our start.—The journey.—Salem.—The Sheveroy hills, and our reception.—Anglo-Indian hospitality.—Claret cup.—News of bison and bears.—Googooloo on trail.—We follow.—A bull-bison lost. The news of bears confirmed.—Their habits described.—We start for the Bear Hill.—The reconnaissance.—Bears afoot.—Their strongholds invested.—A foraging party surprised.—Two bears die.—Three more afoot.—Another couple yield their spoils.—Desperate encounter with an enraged vixen, who almost proved a Tartar.—“The Old Shekarry” in a fix for a time, but wins the game at last.—The bag of the day.—The return.

ALL were in good spirits, and it would have been a curious sight for a stranger from Europe to have witnessed the departure of our party as they filed through the gateway in front of my bungalow, singing an extemporaneous song descriptive of the great sporting feats they were going to perform.

First came our eight horses in their head-stalls and jules (stable-clothing), with their saddles loosely girthed, each led by his respective syce or groom and followed by the grass-cutter, who carried the head and heel ropes, gram (a kind of bean), and cooking-pots, &c. Then came my two dog-boys, one with a couple of Anglo-Persian greyhounds, and the other with four huge creatures of the Poligar breed, famous

animals to lay after a wounded deer, or to bring a bear or hog to bay. These were followed by the gang, with Chineah at their head, each carrying a gun or rifle and short spear, and numbering, with B——'s followers, close upon a dozen strong and wiry fellows, fit for any kind of work. Baggage-ponies, bullocks, and coolies, laden with tents, boxes, &c., with a troop of servants and hangers-on, brought up the rear.

Our people were all going on three marches in advance to the village of Totteyum (about thirty-five miles from Trichy, on the Salem road), where they were to await our arrival, as, our leave not having yet appeared in orders, we were unable to quit cantonments until the next day. The police authorities had been previously warned to have carriage-bullocks posted for us every five or six miles, as we determined to lose no time on the road. The next day being the 1st of May, we attended a muster parade, and, after paying a few visits P. P. C. to the ladies of our acquaintance, and bidding adieu to some "of the kindest men who ever drew sword," at about 3 P.M. we attired ourselves in the light and airy costume of muslin shirts, silk long-drawers, and slippers, and stepping into my cart, in a few moments we were rolling along at the rate of five or six miles an hour on the northern road leading to Salem.

For some time we amused ourselves by chaffing and poking fun at the wayfarers, particularly with some pilgrims who were carrying two encased chatties

(earthen pots) of Ganges water,* which we taxed them with having taken from some tank on the road, and which at last they avowed.

When it grew dark we lighted our lamp, and chess and *écarté* served to pass away the time until we grew sleepy, when we rolled ourselves in the coverlids, and were soon in the arms of Morpheus.

About 2 A.M. we were awoke by the flashing of torches and the sound of voices, and found ourselves halted in front of the Travellers' Bungalow at Totteyum, surrounded by our people, who had arrived the evening before. After hastily swallowing a cup of coffee, and lighting cheroots, fresh bullocks were yoked, and we were soon again *en route*, surrounded by the gang, our tents and baggage having gone on before.

At about 8 A.M. we arrived at the Travellers' Bungalow of Namkul (distance twenty miles), where we found our servants, a bath, and breakfast awaiting us. After having arranged these preliminaries to our satisfaction, we strolled out with our guns, shot a few teal and snipe under the bund or embankment of a tank, and visited a fine old hill-fort, close to the town, which was built by the inhabitants in former years as a refuge against the Mahratta hordes and other predatory bands that then ravaged the country.

* The water of the Ganges, being considered holy, is much used by the Hindoos in the performance of their "caste ceremonies," and is an article of commerce in the south of India.

As our people had not yet got quite into marching trim, we slept at Namkul, starting the next morning for Moonoo-Choudy, distance fifteen miles, where we remained during the heat of the day, going on in the cool of the evening to Malloor, distance eleven miles, in which place we passed the night, and rode into Salem the following morning, putting up with Captain S——, who was commanding the detachment of native veterans which garrisoned the station.

After breakfast we visited the shop of the celebrated Arnatchellum, whose well-balanced boar-spears, axes, and hunting-knives are renowned throughout India for the temper of the steel and the superior finish of the workmanship. He charges European prices for everything, and I found him as overreaching a rogue as any other nigger.

Salem, though a large and densely-populated town, possesses very few attractions, and as the weather was fearfully hot, and cholera was carrying off great numbers of natives daily, I did not care about exposing my people to it more than necessary, so I sent them off at once with the baggage to Bowani, there to await our arrival.

I kept "Five Minutes," Googooloo, a couple of servants, and the pony with me, together with one of B——'s horses and the cart, and directed Chineah and the rest of the gang to try and gain all the information they could about the country round about Bowani.

As soon as we had seen them *en route*, we made

preparations for ascending the Sheveroy Hills, which rise from the plains about five miles to the northward of the town of Salem, and are about six thousand feet above the level of the sea.

The magistrates, judges, and collectors reside here during the greater part of the year, and we were fortunate enough to be able to engage a furnished bungalow belonging to Mr. B——, a coffee-planter, where we resolved to stay for a few days, as B—— had been ailing, on account of the excessive heat.

A short time before sunset we began to ascend the ghaut (pass), by a rather steep winding road cut through the jungle, so that it was almost dark by the time we got to the top. The air was delightfully cool, and we appeared to inhale quite a different atmosphere to that we had lately left in the low country. We found a very comfortable bungalow prepared for us, and, being rather tired, we turned in early, and enjoyed a most refreshing night's rest, the first we had had for some time, as in the very hot weather, unless the "punkah" (fan) is kept going over the bed unceasingly, but little sleep is obtainable—one tosses about from side to side all night, and gets up in the morning exhausted, and overcome with lassitude and langour.

I rose quite a new man the next morning, and, finding B—— still asleep, strolled out into the garden to enjoy the fresh air, which was mild and cool, as on a May-day in England.

The cottage we occupied is built on a little hill

or knoll, and surrounded by beautifully-kept coffee-plantations. The sides and roof were literally covered with odoriferous creepers, among which I noticed the woodbine, honeysuckle, jessamine, passion-flower, and a tall climbing fuchsia with very large scarlet bloom. Flowers which I never saw in the low country appeared to grow indigenous. I noticed the primroses, violets, and crocus in the parterres round the house, besides lilies, roses, and geraniums, of all kinds and colours. The kitchen-garden was full of European vegetables, and the cabbages, cauliflowers, turnips, carrots, lettuces, peas, artichokes, radishes, and mustard and cress forcibly recalled my boyhood's home in Old England.

B—— joined me in the garden, and we were engaged in gathering the materials for a salad for breakfast (which in India is considered a great luxury), when we heard the clattering of horses' hoofs on the road, and almost immediately two coffee-planters, D—— and B——, rode up to the cottage-door and introduced themselves.

In no part of the world, and I have travelled over a good deal of it, have I met with that free courtesy and affable urbanity which is invariably to be found among the British residents in India. A stranger passing through the country meets with the most generous and open-handed hospitality wherever he goes, and the supposed characteristics of an Englishman—"stiffness and cold hauteur of manner"—are rarely to be met with in the East. On the arrival of

a stranger at an up-country station, it is the custom for all the residents (whatever may be their rank) to call upon him; hence arises that kind and friendly intercourse which exists everywhere in Anglo-Indian society, and is rarely to be met with elsewhere.

“We heard you had come up,” said D——, a fine specimen of an open-hearted, good-tempered Englishman, “and not knowing whether you had thought of laying in a supply of provisions from the low country, as you can procure nothing here, I have taken the liberty of bringing you half a sheep of my own breeding, a few fattened fowls and ducks, some eggs and cream, a leash of hares, and a few brace of partridges, which ought to eat tender, as they were killed nearly a week ago.”

“Thanks, old fellow!” said B——. “They will indeed prove a treat, for we have been obliged to eat mutton and fowls almost immediately after they have been killed, lately, as nothing will keep throughout the day in the low country this weather. Here, Harry, do you concoct for us one of your insinuating ‘claret cups,’ whilst I see ‘Five Minutes’ about the breakfast, for I think we shall be six, as I expect R—— the collector, and the sub-judge, their horse-keepers having already arrived.”

Whilst he was speaking they rode up, and in a few moments we were all sitting in the porch discussing the brew: which was so highly approved of by all parties that I will give the recipe, for the benefit of my readers, as it was prepared by the factotum of the

late Brigadier of Hyderabad, Arab Mac (a celebrated old Indian general, of great racing and sporting notoriety), who gloried in having the finest stud and the best kitchen in India :—" To a bottle of claret add three wine-glasses of cognac, a couple of large table-spoons of sugar, the rind of a lime cut thin, a dozen cloves, the seeds of three cardamum-pods, a quarter of a nutmeg, one green chili, a small sprig of borage, a dozen leaves of mint, and a threatening of lime-juice, or, what is perhaps better, a lime cut into thin slices. Let it stand for twenty minutes, and then add three bottles of cooled soda-water, stirring it up well, and serving it out with a ladle whilst in a state of effervescence."

After breakfast, at which sundry shekar projects were discussed, D—— and I rode out to a Mulliary village, followed by our horsekeepers and Googooloo carrying guns, in order to hold a consultation with two men who were said to know the country well.

On the road I shot a brace of spur-fowl and a hare weighing nearly ten pounds—almost twice the size of the ordinary Indian species, which rarely averages more than six. I also enjoyed the wild raspberries, which grew in the woods in great abundance.

On arriving at the village we soon found the men we were looking for, and learnt that bison had been seen the day before in the jungle on the side of the hills. I accordingly sent Googooloo and one of the Mulliarries to follow their trail, and find out if they were there still ; and, accompanied by the other, we

went to a second village, where a man resided who knew some hill full of caves which were inhabited by several bears.

From the account he gave, we determined to try our chance the day after; and, after having waited some time for Googooloo, who did not make his appearance, we returned to our cottage.

Whilst we were at dinner he came in and told me that he had tracked a herd of fine bison (a bull and four cows) to a small detached hill, a short distance from the foot of the Sheveroys, where he came up to them whilst they were feeding, and, after watching them for some time, he retired without disturbing them.

As this was not very far from the place where the bears were said to be, B——, D——, and myself agreed to start early the following morning to try and beat the bison out. The collector sent some of his “peons” (police) to prepare beaters, and D—— sent down a small tent to a village where we intended to sleep the following night.

The next morning we started at daybreak; descended the ghaut, and wound round the base of the Sheveroys for a distance of nearly seven miles, when Googooloo pointed us out the place where he had come up with the bison. Had I been alone, I should undoubtedly have preferred to try stalking rather than beating, but with three (and one a green hand, D——) it was out of the question.

We found the peons had collected about forty

coolies and villagers, whom I sent with Googooloo to the further side of the hill, as I felt convinced the herd, if it was still there, would endeavour to make for the thick jungle on the sides of the Sheveroys.

There were two likely-looking places for the bison to break, at one of which B—— posted himself, and D—— and myself took the other. Both places were by a broad stony watercourse that wound along the valley which separated the hill where the bison were said to be, from the Sheveroy range, and the herd would have to cross it in order to gain the opposite jungle.

D—— was very anxious to kill a bison, and I promised to give him the shot should the herd break into the open near us. He annoyed me very much, however, by his fidgety movements, for he could not sit quiet a moment, and kept handling the lock of an old rifle, until I made up my mind that he would either shoot me or some of the half-dozen people whom, in spite of my remonstrance, he would have sitting near us, to my intense disgust; for my olfactory organs received a shock they did not get over for some time, from the offensive smell that was emitted by the exhalation from their bodies, the cocoa-nut oil in their hair, and the garlic and sour rice they had been eating.

At last the bison broke, and a fine bull came tearing down right in front of us, and, when about twenty paces distant, D—— put up his piece; but, being an old and unserviceable piece of goods, it snicked, and

away went the quarry in the thick jungle on the other side the watercourse.

I caught a glimpse of his hinder-quarters as he was tearing along the rising ground on the opposite side of the ravine, and I let drive with my rifle, hoping to stop him by a chance shot. I heard the "thud" of the ball as it struck and doubled him up for the moment, but he was not hit in a vital place, and with a loud bellowing he tore through the dense jungle that covers the sides of the hills.

Both D—— and I tracked him for some distance, and in some places large gouts of blood were visible ; but on coming to a watercourse, which bore the marks of his having cleared at a bound, I gave over the pursuit, and went in search of B——, whom we heard fire a double shot. We found him taking out the offal of a doe spotted-deer he had killed, and preparing it for carriage. He had seen three bison break, but they were out of range of his rifle.

The beaters now made their appearance, and, slinging the deer on long poles, which they carried over their shoulders, took it to the place where we had left our horses. I chose a dozen of the most intelligent-looking of the number to accompany us, and dismissed the rest with a bucksheesh ; telling them they should be well paid if they brought us news of large game. Then, mounting our horses, we rode off to the village where our tent had been sent, which was about six miles further, and found "Five

Minutes" anxiously expecting our arrival, dinner being nearly ready.

We had a most refreshing bathe in a tank, on the bund or stone embankment of which our tent was pitched, under the shade of a beautiful banian-tree, and afterwards did ample justice to his entertainment. Poor D—— was in a dreadful way about his old piece, and I spared him the roasting I had fully intended to have given him for the nervous agitation he had shown whilst waiting for the bison to break.

After dinner was over I sent for the head man of the village, and told him our intention of setting out very early the next morning after bears, and we were agreeably surprised to find he had already prepared people who knew their haunts to accompany us.

We assembled all our people in a circle, distributed the usual allowance of grog and tobacco, and afterwards heard all they had to say about the game to be found in the country, and the most effective manner of pursuing it. After I heard all their opinions, I made up my mind to start an hour before the first appearance of dawn for the hill where the bears were said to be, which was about a coss, or two miles, from the village, and to await their returning to their caves; as in this part of the country, during the hot weather, bears roam about the jungle in search of food all the night and return to their caves in the morning, where they remain during the intense heat of the day, issuing forth again at sunset. They live chiefly upon the wild fruits of the jungle and white

ants, which latter insect they devour in thousands, by scraping a hole with their claws, and sucking them out of their nests. They are also passionately fond of honey, and show themselves wonderfully sharp in finding out wild bees' nests, climbing lofty trees in search of them.

The next morning we were all up and equipped for sport by 2 A.M., and, after a substantial feed, started for the Bear Hill on foot, as the villagers said the route was difficult for horses.

At this season of the year the night is not at any time dark, and we managed to get along very well in Indian file, although the path was very narrow, and in some places we had to crawl along on our hands and knees. We arrived at the foot of the hill some time before sunrise, and here I halted the party, which numbered about twenty coolies and villagers, and telling B—— to prevent any of them from straying, and to keep as quiet as possible, I went forward to reconnoitre, accompanied by Googooloo, the Mulliarry, and two villagers who knew the bears' caves.

Although the hill was not more than 800 feet in height it was very steep, and the ascent was the more difficult on account of numberless rocky crags which were entwined with thick bush. At last we managed to climb up the dry bed of a watercourse, where we noticed the fresh traces of bears in many places, and after a good deal of scrambling and climbing up ledges of rock, we arrived at the summit, which was

a small table-land covered with tufts of coarse grass and large boulders of rock.

As we were going along, Googooloo suddenly stopped, gave his usual grunt to attract attention, and tapping me on the shoulder, pointed me out two bears at the foot of the hill. With the aid of my glass I could see they were very busily engaged in digging up the earth; so, setting the Mulliarry to watch their movements, I went on to the caves, and, after a careful examination, found seven entrances, five of which bore marks of being inhabited by bears.

I sent one of the villagers and Googooloo to bring up the rest of the party as quietly as possible, so as not to disturb the game we knew was afoot, and by the time they arrived, I and the other villagers had managed to block up the two smallest entrances (which did not seem to have been frequented of late) with stones and pieces of rock.

I posted B—— on a rock which commanded the two entrances of the largest cave, and D—— by another. The other two I guarded by some of the villagers who were armed with matchlocks, and I despatched half-a-dozen others to different elevated peaks, from which they could survey all the surrounding country.

When all were in their places I went with Googooloo to the Mulliarry, who was watching the two bears, and he pointed them out to me in the same place we had first seen them.

Accompanied by Googooloo, carrying my second

gun (an eight smooth-bore), I stole down the hill as gently as I could, making for a large rock which appeared to me to be within a short distance of the place where I had seen the bears.

I was some time before I could make my way to it, as the bush and underwood were thick, and we had to make our way through dense masses of entangled creepers. At last we gained the rock, and Googooloo's quick eye soon discovered our friends still hard at work, scraping up the earth of the ant-hill.

We stole gently up, seeking the cover of rocks and bushes, until I got within fifteen paces of them, still undiscovered. Watching their movements until I got a fair opportunity, I planted a rifle-ball behind the shoulder of one, which rolled over and over on the ground in the agonies of death, and then gave the other the contents of my second barrel, which took effect about the small ribs, tumbling her over for the moment. She, however, soon got up again, raised herself on her haunches, uttering a peculiarly melancholy cry, and looked round in a most woe-begone manner. This position offered me a splendid shot, and I finished her career with a ball from my second gun.

Having ascertained that both were dead, Googooloo climbed a large tree that was near, and fastened the Mulliarry's turban-cloth, like a streamer, to one of the highest branches, in order to serve as a landmark for the coolies when they came to collect the game. He also cut off a claw from the right fore-paw

of each bear, so as to mark it as mine, a precaution the gang always took, in consequence of an individual having obtained a deer which I had undoubtedly shot at a battue some time previously, and, to the intense disgust of all my people, allowed him to appropriate and carry off.

As we were leisurely returning up the watercourse towards the caves where B—— and D—— were posted, I heard a rolling of stones and a curious grunting noise close behind us. I jumped on a large boulder of rock, and saw three bears making their way slowly up the watercourse in the same direction we were going. I immediately made signs to Googooloo and the Mulliarry to hide, and I crouched behind the rock until they were past, as I wished my friends to get a shot, and they were evidently bound their way.

These three had hardly passed when Googooloo pointed me out two others making their way up the hill by the same route. Standing behind a rock so as not to alarm them, I let drive right and left as they passed within a few paces of me. They were both badly hit behind the shoulder, and each must have imagined the other was the cause of his injury, for with a ferocious noise they immediately attacked each other, and closing in a hug, rolled down the hill some short distance. I followed with my second gun, and found one dead and the other leaning over him in a very deplorable condition. He was too far gone to take any notice of my approach, although he con-

tinued to make a fearful moaning, which I put a stop to by giving him a quietus in the shape of a pill behind the ear, which finished his career.

I had just commenced reloading, when I heard a loud straggling volley from the top of the hill where my friends were posted, and almost immediately it was followed by a shriek from the Mulliarry, whom I saw make a spring into the jungle just in time to avoid the charge of a huge female bear who came rushing down the watercourse in a most ferocious manner. I was directly in her path, and with a roar she made right at me; I let drive at her head with my only barrel that had not been discharged, but it failed to stop her, and she had knocked me down and was on me in the twinkling of an eye.

The slope of the hill was steep, and we both of us rolled over and over several times; I was almost breathless, when Googooloo rushed on her with his bill-hook and endeavoured to attract her attention. Luckily she could not bite at all, as my shot had smashed her snout and lower jaw to pieces; but she kept me locked in her embrace, and squeezed me more roughly than affectionately.

My head was well protected with a bison-skin cap; and getting a tight grasp of her fur on each side, with my arms underneath hers, so that she could not do me much injury with her claws, I regularly wrestled with her for some time; and although I brought my science to play, and threw her on her back several times "by giving her the leg," she never let go her

hug, and I was almost suffocated with the quantity of blood and froth that came from her wound and covered my face, beard, and chest.

Googooloo made frantic hits at her from time to time with his bill-hook (the only weapon he had, having lent D—— his knife), but I ordered him to desist, as his blows did not appear to do the bear much harm, and I was afraid of catching one. At last Bruin appeared to be getting weaker, and I saw her wounds and loss of blood were telling; and after a little trouble I managed to draw my knife, and drove it up to the hilt in her body under the armpits. She gave me an ugly hug, and fell over on her side, pulling me with her. It was her last effort, and I picked myself up quite out of puff, but not much injured, having only received a slight claw on the loins and another rather more severe on the instep. I drew my pistol, which I could not manage to get at before, to give her a settler, but it was not required—the game was over, my antagonist was dead.

Being covered with blood and dust from head to foot, I must have presented a comical appearance to B—— and D——, who came rushing down in pursuit of the bear, which D—— had slightly wounded before she fell in with me. They had met the Mulliarry *en route*, who said that he had seen me killed; and no sooner did Googooloo get sight of this individual than he sprang on him like a tiger, for his cowardice in running away, and we had some difficulty

in releasing him from his clutches, and preventing him from being strangled.

One of the coolies brought me the water-skin, and I washed the blood away from my person and threw off a part of my soiled clothes. I then tore off a part of my shirt and bandaged up my loins and foot, which latter bled considerably, and was very painful when I walked, as the claws had penetrated gaiter, boot, and stocking, entering the flesh to the depth of half an inch. Having arranged matters as I best could, I managed to scramble up the hill, though I had some difficulty in doing so, as the back of my head and my arms, shoulders, and knees, were considerably bruised; and I felt rather shaken and tired after my encounter.

When I arrived at the caves, I found B—— had killed the two bears, and D—— had caught a young one alive. We remained there about half an hour longer, when another female and two half-grown cubs came rolling along, all of whom bit the dust before our united volley. D—— also went after two others which were seen coming up the hill, but were deterred from coming near the caves, having taken alarm at the firing. He killed one and severely wounded the other, but somehow or another managed to lose it.

The sun had now risen high above the horizon; the breeze had died away, and not a breath of air was stirring; a mirage was seen spread over the plain, out of which the wooded hills rose like distant islands

The sultriness was getting more and more oppressive, and it was piping hot before our coolies had managed to collect the game at the foot of the hill, which consisted of four male bears, five female, two half-grown cubs, and a very young one caught alive.

A number of village people, hearing of our sport, came to carry the game in ; and my servant thoughtfully brought my pony, which I was glad of, as my foot gave me considerable pain.

I superintended the preparation of the skins (as my own man who usually did that kind of work was with the gang at Bowani) by seeing them stretched tightly and pegged down on the ground, exposed to the heat of the sun, whilst wood-ashes, cocoa-nut oil, turmeric and arsenical soap were rubbed in.

Finding myself rather stiff and sore from my bruises, I mounted my pony "Gooty" and rode back to our bungalow at the top of the Sheveroy Hill, where I arrived late in the evening, leaving B—— and D—— to continue their sport with the bears a few days longer, whilst I had my foot looked at by the Doctor, and got fit for work again.

CHAPTER XI.

"There he sat, and as I thought expounding the Law and the Prophets, until on drawing a little nearer I found he was only expatiating on the merits of a brown horse."—BRACEBRIDGE HALL.

BOWANI.

Sankerrydroog.—An adventure with hyenas.—Bowani.—Alligator-fishing —We start for Andior.—"Gooty," my shooting pony: his pedigree and achievements.—Small-game shooting.—Antelope stalking.—Andior.—The monkeys and the Brahmins.—Murrel-fishing.

A FEW days after our encounter with the bears, I received a note from B—— telling me that he had heard of rare sport near Bowani, and begging me to join him at the public bungalow at Sankerrydroog, which is two marches from Salem, and about half-way between that place and Bowani. As the wound in my foot was not quite healed, I borrowed a palanquin from the collector, and starting the next evening at 4, arrived at Sankerrydroog at 6 A.M., distance thirty-five miles, having stopped a couple of hours for refreshments at M'Donald's choultry.

I found that the trophies of two bears and a fine buck spotted-deer had been taken during my absence, and B—— informed me that a large cheeta had been seen prowling about the old hill-fort for some days previous, and that at last, after some trouble, it had

been tracked (the evening before) by some of the villagers to a cave, half-way up the hill, and large stones had been placed at the entrance, so as to prevent its coming out.

After breakfast we began to ascend the hill, B—— and D—— on foot, armed with rifles, and I mounted on my favourite little nag "Gooty," with a boar-spear and my famous dogs "Ali" and "Hassan," which were half Poligar, half bloodhound. We soon came to the entrance of the cave, which was about four feet in diameter, and, after a fruitless examination for pugs and trails, some of the villagers who were with us pulled down the stones built up at the mouth, and D——, B——, and a massauljee with a couple of lighted torches entered, but were almost immediately obliged to return on account of the foul air and stench within. We then placed a bundle of straw inside, and set fire to it, hoping to drive the brute out with the smoke, but no good result was obtained, although B—— thought he heard a moaning kind of noise inside. We also fired off several rockets and crackers, which had the effect of dislodging some of the inhabitants, for hundreds of curious little four-eared bats came out.

Finding that none of these annoyances would bring out the cheeta, I sent in my two dogs, and immediately knew that game was a-foot, as Ali gave tongue the moment he entered, and very shortly afterwards dismal howls and strange rumbling noises were heard issuing from the bowels of the earth, and

I began to be alarmed for the dogs, when suddenly I heard a row, and saw my poor friend D—— (who in spite of my remonstrances would stand right in front of the mouth of the cave) knocked over on the broad of his back by a huge male hyena, whilst in the twinkling of an eye the female, a couple of cubs, and my two dogs passed over him as he lay almost helpless on the ground, and made the best of their way down the hill and across some cultivated fields; B—— let drive a couple of shots as they passed, and doubled up the female, and I descended the hill as well as I could, and after a burst of a few minutes, Gooty brought me alongside of the male, who was vainly struggling to get away from my two dogs, one of whom had hold of him by the ear, and the other on the opposite side by the throat. As I did not wish to run the chance of having either of them mauled or bitten, I drove my spear home between the shoulders, and finished the game, after which I went to look after poor D——, whom I found much shaken with the fall, his chin and throat being considerably damaged by the claws of the brutes as they passed over him.

We returned to the bungalow, convinced that the villagers had mistaken the hyena for a cheeta; and after D—— had washed, and plastered up his face, we all three got into my bullock-cart, and arrived at Bowani soon after sunset, where we found Mother Garrow and her dusky train of dancing nymphs from the pagoda awaiting our arrival at the public bun-

galow, which is very pleasantly situated on the ruins of an old fort, near a large and rather celebrated pagoda dedicated to the worship of the goddess Bowani (the deity of the Thugs) at the sun-gun or conflux of the rivers Cauvery and Bowani.

Chineah and the gang were delighted with the place, and described the Andior and Samungalum jungle as being alive with game of all kinds.

The next morning we strolled along the banks of the river with our rifles, as Chineah had seen several alligators basking in the sun on a sandbank the day before ; and although we saw plenty of marks of their huge claws imprinted in the sand near the edge of the water, none were to be seen.

In spite of Dr. Johnson's reflections on anglers, I determined to try a piscatorial experiment, so I returned to the village, and got the "lohar" (blacksmith) to forge two large barbed hooks on the ends of a couple of strong English dog-chains, which I made fast to the storm-ropes of my tent, attaching large logs of very light mango-wood as floats. I then got a village "chucklar" (shoemaker), a Pariah of the lowest caste, to accompany me with a couple of young pigs, and my servant brought a quantity of raw mutton to serve as bait. Having made all my arrangements, I returned to the spot where I had left B—— and D——, couched behind bushes waiting for the chance of a shot, and explained my intentions ; then passing the ropes over the forks of the trees so as to give me additional purchase, I baited my hooks

and flung them into the river. The "chucklar" soon caught up my idea, and by chewing the end of the pigs' tails he elicited the most melodious music, which had the desired effect and attracted the alligators to that part of the river. I threw several pieces of mutton into the stream, and in a very short time there were upwards of a dozen of these immense brutes splashing about and scrambling with each other for the meat.

At last one of my floats gave a bob (it was more than a nibble), and then disappeared under water. My gang and a number of villagers seized the rope, and with some difficulty we hauled the brute to the bank of the river, when he began rolling about in the sand, trying to disgorge the bait, and knocking about with his tail so that I began to be afraid he would cut the rope and escape.

I ran down with my rifle, and with some difficulty slipped a bowline knot over his head, and in a few moments the gang had fastened up his mouth with a roll of strong cord, and doubled his legs over his back, and in this manner he was dragged along in triumph.

In less than two hours we had caught four more, the largest being a little over eleven feet in length. We afterwards let them loose on the plain, and, mounting our horses, killed them with our boar-spears, which entered the throat behind the shoulders and the under parts of the body easily enough; and we found that a hardened rifle-ball would enter any

part of the back or head, which have been stated to be shot-proof by some writers. In the evening we had another nautch, which was prolonged until the "short hours," when we distributed our "largess" to the votaries of Terpsichore and turned in.

On the morrow we started for Andior *en route* for Combei Jungles, and as the distance was not much over twelve miles, and small game was said to be abundant, we determined to shoot our way, having our horses following in case any of us being tired.

My little nag "Gooty" was a thoroughly broken shooting-pony, and, although the Rarian system had not then come out, a perfect understanding existed between us: he would come at my call or whistle; stand perfectly quiet when ordered; allow me to fire from between his ears, without flinching; would take the water like a duck; was famous in a scramble across country; had no fear, and could almost do everything but speak. He came into my hands in a strange way; I was encamped outside the village of Nandeir, being *en route* from Hyderabad to Seetabuldee, and tired and overcome with lassitude, having ridden from Mudnoor, a distance of fifty-two miles, in the heat of the day; I was lounging on a carpet stretched in front of my tent, enjoying the soothing fragrance of my hookah, and amusing myself with talking to some handsome Mussulmauni damsels who constantly passed to and fro, as they went to draw water from a ghaut on the Godavery river, when a venerable-looking old man, with a huge silver beard rolling

down his chest, and clad in a fakeer's or dervish's garb, came up, leading a chestnut mare, and accosting me with the usual salutation, begged "Allah ka nam se" (in the name of Allah) that I would assist him. He evidently took me to be one of the "Faithful," for besides speaking the language fluently, I wore a native dress, consisting of a muslin ungreka, embroidered silk long-drawers and turban, and my naturally dark complexion was considerably deepened by constant exposure to the sun. He told me that he had given up the world, *i.e.*, his wives and family, and had devoted the remainder of his days to the service of Mahomed, but that lately "*dark clouds had been hanging over the garden of his fate, and the blossoms of hope were almost withered.*" He was *en route* from Boregaum on the Wurdah river to Hyderabad, in order to be present at the Mohrum festival in that famous Mussulman capital, but he had been detained by illness on the road, his cash was nearly gone, and moreover, the back of his mare, which had been presented to him by the Oomraootee Nawab, on the occasion of his son's recovery from illness, was so galled that he could not ride her, and did not know how to proceed on his journey.

His mare was a blood-looking little creature of the Mahratta caste, with a running sore on her withers nearly the size of the palm of my hand; and although at the time I thought the wound was incurable, and she would never again be fit for work, I offered ten rupees for her, which the old man very gladly

accepted. I had an old Arab syce who was famous for his knowledge of herbs, and under his care she got rapidly well, doing me good service for several years. "Gooty" was one of her progeny by "Chunda lal" (the Red Moon), formerly the property of the late celebrated Dewan of the Deccan, of that name, a magnificent chestnut Arab of remarkably pure caste, well known in the Nizam's dominions as the winner of the great Moul Alli steeple-chase.

Gooty proved a "chip of the old block," and commenced his career by carrying off the pony races, Galloway stakes, and hurdle-race (weight for inches) at Hyderabad, under the name of the "Red Rover," afterwards beating General Wahab's celebrated black pony "D. I. O." in two matches, and distinguishing himself at Bellary and Bangalore, where he put a great many gold mohurs in the pocket of his master, ever proving a thorough good one. His greatest achievement was, however, performed at Gooty (which name he has since borne), where he carried his master safely up the steep rocky scarp of that celebrated hill-fort to the round-house on the extreme summit, and down again; a feat which, although it has often been attempted, was never accomplished in the memory of the oldest inhabitant, or of the old Nawab who had been confined there as a state-prisoner for upwards of five-and-twenty years. A gallant officer of the 48th had a brass plate fixed on a rock about half-way up, to commemorate his having ridden a horse named "Firefly" up to that point.

“Gooty,” although he measured barely thirteen hands two inches, was famous in difficult country, and would follow a boar *con amore*, doubling like a greyhound after a hare. “*Mais revenons à nos moutons.*” We passed through a good deal of low brush jungle and rumnah grass, alive with small game; for in less than four hours we were satiated with our sport, having killed three couple and a half of “florikin” (or lesser bustard), the finest bird for the table in India, thirteen leash of hares, nine brace of grey partridge, and three of grey quail; and as the sun’s rays were burning intensely powerful, and our beaters began to show unmistakable signs of distress, we adjourned to the shade of a widely-spreading peepul-tree, and were enjoying our “kieff” (a Turkish word signifying a state of dreamy existence, when the body is motionless, all the senses are at rest, and the mind dormant), and discussing cheroots and brandy-panee, when a villager who was passing by informed us that he had just seen a large herd of antelope on a “maidaun” or plain, about two miles further on.

We loaded our rifles, and after a few minutes’ canter arrived at the place indicated, where we saw a herd consisting of about sixty does and seven or eight bucks, which were easily distinguishable, on account of their long spiral horns and much darker colour. They caught sight of us almost immediately, and our sudden appearance caused some consternation; for the does collected in a body behind the

bucks, who stood as if on sentry, carefully watching our movements, although we were at least six hundred yards distant. I saw at once that they were very wild, and that the utmost caution would be necessary in stalking so as to get within shot; we therefore rode slowly away, until I could see by my field-glass that they had ceased to take any notice of us.

I then directed B—— and D—— where to take post under cover of some bushes, whilst I undertook to stalk the leader, a fine black buck, with a beautiful pair of antlers, and to draw the herd, if possible, towards their ambuscade. I divested myself of my white pith hunting-cap, substituting a head-dress formed of creepers, and cutting a number of pliable twigs I interwove them into a kind of basketwork screen, in which I fastened green boughs, so as to make it resemble a bush as much as possible, leaving an opening through which I could point my rifle. When this was completed I sallied forth, taking care to get to leeward, and seeking any cover I could find, either behind bushes or from any slight undulations of the ground, until I got to within five hundred yards of the herd, who were quietly browsing, unconscious of danger.

Here I lay for some time at full length on the ground behind my screen so as to give my companions time to get posted, and taking out my telescope I surveyed the herd for some time before I could make out the position of the leader, whom at last I twigged

lying down and chewing the cud, under the shade of a bauble-bush, some short distance from the others. I stole gently forwards, sometimes stooping and walking, and at others creeping on my hands and knees (which is extremely laborious work), until I got within two hundred yards of him, when, feeling out of breath and rather unsteady, I rested for some time. As soon as I had recovered my breath, I slowly commenced my onward progress until I got within a hundred and twenty yards, when, from the motion of the herd, I saw that my walking bush had excited some suspicion, for they began to close up, and crane their necks in my direction; which movement was immediately perceived and understood by their leader, who sprang on his feet, stamped, and advanced some five or six paces towards me, snuffing the air as if to reconnoitre. This position offered me a fair shot—I raised the rifle and pulled the trigger just as a low bark escaped him (the signal of alarm to the herd). It was his last warning, for my grooved-bore was true—the bullet sped, and entered his heart; he sprang high into the air and fell dead. I fired my second barrel at the herd, which was in full retreat, bringing down a doe, my ball entering the small ribs near the spine, and paralyzing her hind-quarters; and, after drawing my knife across her throat, I jumped on Gooty, who was brought up by my syce, and followed the herd, driving it towards the spot where B—— and D—— were posted. Both got shots. B—— rolled over a young buck at a long

distance ; and D—— bagged a doe, missing two other fair shots.

We collected the game tied up in front of our saddles, and then made the best of our way towards Andior, where we found our tents pitched under the shade of a beautiful mango tope, in front of which was a large square tank, full of water-lilies, and an old dilapidated pagoda, on the walls of which some scores of the common green tufted monkey sat grinning, jabbering, and making mouths at us, as we passed.

A curious tale is told of a detachment of the Native Infantry having made a colony of these monkeys revenge an insult which was offered them by the inhabitants of Trippasore, the greater part of whom consist of Brahmins. It appears that the military were *en route* to the Presidency, escorting treasure, and the Bunnias, or grain-sellers, raised the price of rice very considerably the day before they passed through their town, which conduct aroused Jack Sepoy's indignation, who, however, smothered his resentment until his return from Madras, when each man filled his haversack with rice and *dhal* (a kind of sweet bean), and on repassing through the town he threw it on the roofs of all the tiled houses, on which lived hundreds of monkeys, occasioning a most ludicrous scene—for immediately the tiles were seen flying in clouds into the streets, until the greater part of the town was unroofed ; for the monkeys, finding the grains slip under the tiles, lifted them up,

and threw them into the street, and as they took one up, the rice slipped under the next, and so on, until a good roof was demolished in a few minutes, to the utter disgust and mortification of the Brahmins, who dare not molest the monkeys, considering these animals sacred, as being the incarnation of their powerful god, Hanimann.

After we had imbibed some cooled Bass, the best beverage for India, B——, who was a fisherman, went down to the tank with his rod, and in the course of half an hour landed over a dozen fine murrel (a voracious kind of fish, somewhat resembling the jack) from four to eight pounds in weight. On cutting them open we found the inside full of leeches, so we declined having them put on our table, to the great satisfaction of Chineah and the gang, who pronounced them delicious.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COMBEI JUNGLE.

Early rising.—“Tiger’s milk.”—A sloth-bear started.—Combei.—Our encampment.—A salt-lick.—Great bag of deer by night.—Ding-ding.—A strange rencontre whilst peafowl-stalking.—Leg-bail.—The death of the tiger.—B——’s sport—A glorious chase.—The bull-nilghau.—The bag.—A black panther.—Strange mode of catching deer.—Return to Bowani.—Finale.

GETTING up early in the morning, after a hard fag the day previous, is at all times a painful operation, more especially during the intensely sultry weather preceding the downfall of the monsoon in India; when sleep, balmy sleep, is banished from the couch of the weary one, and he tosses and rolls about, feverish and restless, in an irritable state of mind, with aching bones, overcome with lassitude and fatigue, the whole night long, unable to obtain even a doze until the cool refreshing breeze of the morning sets in, when to be awoke suddenly is indeed a martyrdom, and to arouse a man without a cause at such a time is to render him unaccountable for his actions.

My servant, “Five Minutes,” upon whom the task of getting us up in the morning usually devolved, was well aware that at this period “the Sahib-log”

are somewhat in the same humour as "bears with sore heads;" for many a boot, candlestick, and empty soda-water bottle had he dodged in his time whilst attempting to rouse some heavy-sleeping "Sub." for parade after a public night at Mess; and, being a wide-awake nigger, he now never exposed himself in this somewhat perilous undertaking without having first provided himself with some emollient and resuscitating mixture calculated to better the human feelings, such as well-cooled claret-cup, soda and brandy, or "tiger's milk," which served better than any "soft words," the nigger knew "to allay wrath." As the latter concoction was considered the most effective, I give the recipe; and if ladies with surly husbands would only try "Five Minutes'" dodge, of administering a dose of "tiger's milk" before they asked for "the needful," to settle the little account of crinoline, &c., they would find it acted upon the milk of human kindness far better than all the wheedling and soft sawder which husbands (too soon, alas!) get accustomed to. Recipe—"Beat up the yolks of three eggs well with half a pint of brandy, a wine-glass of sugar, a bit of lemon-peel cut thin, and a dozen cloves and cardamoms; add a quart of new milk, mix well, grate in the third of a nutmeg, and serve it in a tankard, of which the bottom should be seen before it is removed from the lips."

When "Five Minutes" thought his master was tired over-night, and would be reluctant to move in

the morning, he would carefully prepare a bowl of this insinuating mixture, and, creeping with noiseless steps to the head of the bed, would there remain, bowl in hand, whilst the "chochra," or dressing-boy, turned up the coverlid, put on the unconscious sleeper's socks and boots, and shampooed his limbs until he awoke, when, as soon as he began to rub his eyes, the soothing draught was applied; and its kindly effects would almost immediately demonstrate themselves, for he would allow himself to be dressed "like a good child," and, after a cheroot, was as mild as new milk.

Antelope stalking, the day before, had somewhat knocked me up, and I felt rather stiff on first rising; but after my matinly cup, a plunge in the tank of the pagoda, and a few whiffs of the "fragrant narcotic weed," the lassitude wore off, and we all three mounted our nags and started for Combei, distant from Andior fourteen miles, where we intended to sojourn for a few days, as a herd of bison was said to be in the neighbourhood.

As we rode along, D—— twigged a female sloth-bear climbing leisurely up the side of a rocky hill; so slipping the two Poligar dogs, Ali and Hassan, we gave chase with our boar-spears, but the old vixen was close to her cave, and gave us the slip, to D——'s intense disgust.

On arrival at Combei, which we found to be a small deserted village, abandoned by its original inhabitants on account of fever, and occupied only by

four families of the Mulcher caste (a jungle tribe), things did not appear very promising, so we pitched our camp under a large peepul-tree by a beautifully clear stream full of fish.

When all was arranged to our satisfaction, we strolled out in different directions to look out for bison. D—— and B—— came across fresh trails, but returned immediately, so it was too late to follow them up. I was not so fortunate, although I killed a young spotted deer, and found out a salt-lick, where there were innumerable fresh marks of elk, spotted-deer, jungle-sheep, and some old ones of bison. These animals come from miles round about to eat the earth which they find here and there in the jungle, strongly impregnated with salt, of which they are extremely fond.

At dinner I mentioned the salt-lick I had discovered, and, as it was not more than half a mile from our tents, we resolved to try the Burmese experiment of shooting deer by aid of an artificial light, as the moon did not favour us. Accordingly, Chineah made a lamp with pieces of rag, and a quantity of fat, oil, and tar, which he got from the cook, and fastened it to a bamboo pole about fifteen feet in height; then, providing ourselves with several guns, a carpet, brandy-panee, &c., we went to the salt-lick, a little before dusk, and, having erected a kind of screen with bushes and branches, comfortably established ourselves in front and to leeward of an open space of ground, which was covered with the footprints of

different kinds of deer. Our pole was planted in the ground some half-dozen paces in front, and when it got dark the lamp was lighted, and a piece of bright tin (the lid of a cowrie-box) placed behind, to serve as a reflector, and also to prevent the light from revealing our ambushade.

We waited for nearly an hour without hearing or seeing anything, when suddenly I thought I saw a pair of bright eyes shining like stars from thickets in front of the light, and in a moment a low bark informed me that my plan had succeeded, and that a buck-elk was at hand. I whispered to the others not to fire until I gave the signal—for I knew, from the cry of the buck, that the herd was at hand; and in a few moments he stepped forward, barking, stamping his hoofs, scratching his back with his antlers, and staring at the light; and almost immediately he was followed by the rest of the herd, which must have numbered nearly twenty. The light engrossed all their attention, and they came to within a dozen paces of it before I gave the signal to fire by a low "Coo." B——, D——, Chineah, and myself, let drive double shots, and our volley threw the herd into such confusion that some of us had time to make use of second guns before those that were unwounded could get away.

When the smoke had cleared, we found five dead, and four others wounded, which we despatched. Both B—— and myself felt that it was a poaching kind of game, so we did not care to continue it, and

returned to the tent; but D—— and Chineah remained in the ambushade all night, and managed to bag another buck-elk and four spotted deer, besides which the gang, with the dogs' assistance, next morning brought in five other deer, which they found dead or wounded some distance off in the jungle. The game proved very acceptable to the Mulcher tribes who roam about these jungles; and the gang jerked a considerable quantity of venison, or rather converted it into what they term "Ding-ding," by cutting the meat into long strips, which they rub with salt, ground spices, and dry in the sun, until it becomes as hard as a board. When required for use, it is allowed to soak in water for a couple of hours to soften, and is then broiled over embers, when it is not at all unpalatable, and often constituted the principal part of a Shekarry's fare whilst on trail.

During the next three days, although we constantly made long excursions into the jungle, we were very unsuccessful in meeting with large game, only killing a few deer for food. One evening, as I was returning towards the tent after a long, weary fag, during which I had not pulled trigger, Chineah and one or two of the gang who were with me asked me to shoot a peacock for them that was screaming in a thicket close by. I bade them remain perfectly quiet where they were, whilst I followed it up, guided by the cry, and at last I got so near that I could hear the old birds scratching up the ground, and the young ones chirping or rather whistling; but the under-

wood was so dense that I could not get sight of them, although they must have been within a few paces from me. I clambered down the dry sandy bed of a nullah, and was peering between the trees in the expectation of getting a glimpse of the brood, when, turning stealthily round a large jummona-bush (a kind of willow), I suddenly came face to face with an immense tiger, who had evidently been taking his "*siesta*" under the cool shade of the shelving bank, for when I first caught sight of him he was stretching himself and yawning as if only just awake. Doubtless it was a mutual surprise, but I was the first to recover my self-possession, for without a moment's hesitation I swung round, and notwithstanding we were barely six feet apart, and my gun (a double eight-gauge by Westley Richards) was only loaded with No. 4 shot, I let drive right and left full into his face. Before the smoke cleared away, the tiger, uttering an appalling shriek of rage, sprang clear over my head, and fell with a crash against the opposite bank: whilst I, without waiting to watch his further movements, gave "leg bail," and ran in a contrary direction down the nullah. Finding that I was not pursued, I reloaded with ball, and "Richard was himself again," for I must own my serenity of mind was somewhat disturbed at such an unlooked-for rencontre. Chineah, attracted by the double report, now came up, and, having taken my pet rifle from him, I slung the smooth-bore over my shoulder, directed him to remain quiet in a tree, and again

made my way to the scene of action. I soon came across the tiger's pugs, and followed them up to a pool of water where there were marks of his having quenched his thirst a few moments before.

The double charge of shot I administered at such close quarters had evidently taken effect, for the trail was marked with large crimson drops, and I knew that his sight was partially if not entirely destroyed, as from time to time he had struck his head against the steep banks on each side of the nullah, leaving large gouts of blood behind him. In a few minutes I heard sundry strange noises in a patch of reeds and corinda-bushes by the side of the nullah, and from the "swearing" of a troop of monkeys in the trees overhead on each bank I knew what to expect. I clambered up a boulder of rock, from whence I could see the tiger going round and round, evidently quite blind, for every now and then he knocked his head against stones and bushes, when he would give a short angry roar, tear up the ground, and bite at everything within his reach. I saw at a glance how matters were, so stealing gently up I aimed just behind the shoulder, and the ball passing through the heart immediately put him out of his misery, for he sprang high into the air and dropped stone dead. On examination I found the whole of the upper part of the face was blown to pieces and both eyes destroyed with the effect of my first shots; indeed, the head was a mass of congealed blood, none of the features being distinguishable; however, such is the

tenacity of life in the feline race that he managed even in this condition to make his way for upwards of half a mile although totally blind.

A whistle brought up my followers, and we immediately commenced denuding the tiger of his spoils, in which operation we were overtaken by darkness, but by lighting a huge fire we managed to accomplish our purpose, and afterwards made the best of our way to the tents, where I found B—— and D—— deeply interested in exploring the interior of a huge marrow-pie, the former having that morning killed a fine nilghau within a few hundred paces of our encampment. After dinner we superintended the pegging down of the skins, and retired early to rest, as the Mulchers had tracked up the herd of nilghau, and we determined if possible to drive them into the more open country on the morrow, and ride them down with our boar-spears.

I sounded the "*reveille*" through the camp an hour before dawn, and after having fortified the "inner man" and partaken of a "stirrup cup," we lighted our cheroots, mounted our nags, and under the guidance of the Mulchers set out for the cover in which the game had been marked. It was a glorious morning, and we were all in the best of spirits. As we rode along, accompanied by the gang and the greater part of our followers, who were to act as beaters, every now and then we put up coveys of quail, partridge, or rock-pigeon, and once or twice we caught sight of troops of antelope and spotted

deer bounding through the more open jungle. After a cursory survey of the country, which was anything but fair riding-ground, being covered with low scrub jungle and intersected with innumerable nullahs and gullies, we took our posts some little distance from each other, whilst our people extended themselves in a large semicircle, and advanced slowly, shouting and beating tomtoms. In the course of a few minutes a tremendous yell informed us that the game was afoot, a crashing of underwood was heard, and a herd of nine nilghau, consisting of two bulls and seven cows, broke into the plain.

We immediately laid the dogs into them, and, after a smart burst of about a mile, two of the hindmost cows were brought to a stand-still, Hassan and Slogee pursuing one, whilst Bran and Ali fastened on the other; the greyhounds yelping and giving tongue, but not having the pluck to lay hold. Leaving the fallen to the care of D——, who, being but indifferently mounted, was pounding along in the rear, B—— and I each selected a bull, and after sundry purls and divers charges, in which we were often the pursued, both of us managed to “bring our game to grass.” The one I was after charged repeatedly, and, notwithstanding I was admirably mounted on my pet hog-hunter, Lall Babba, it was not until we had covered a good four miles of ground that I managed at last, when the quarry was swerving about from side to side, breathless and exhausted, to drive my spear in behind the shoulder and

out of the chest, when he succumbed and bit the dust.

The nilghau,* from the Hindostani *nil*, *blue*, and *ghau*, *cow*, is about the height of a galloway, and somewhat resembles what a hybrid would be between a deer and a cow. The bull has curved pointed horns, a short mane, but hardly any dewlap. The cow is smaller, and of a dun fawn-colour. Both have beautiful black eyes, like those of the deer.

On rejoining the gang, we found that D—— had despatched the two cows seized by the dogs, and wounded a third with his rifle, which latter the dogs were still chasing. We accordingly loosened the saddles of our nags, and reclined under a tree whilst our syces rubbed them down; and after some time D—— returned, having killed the third cow, when, as the sun was extremely powerful, we remounted and made the best of our way to the tents, leaving the gang to break up the deer and bring in the skins. The flesh of the nilghau somewhat resembles venison, but is coarser; the hump, however, when salted and spiced, is not to be despised, and the marrow is one of the greatest delicacies to be had in India.

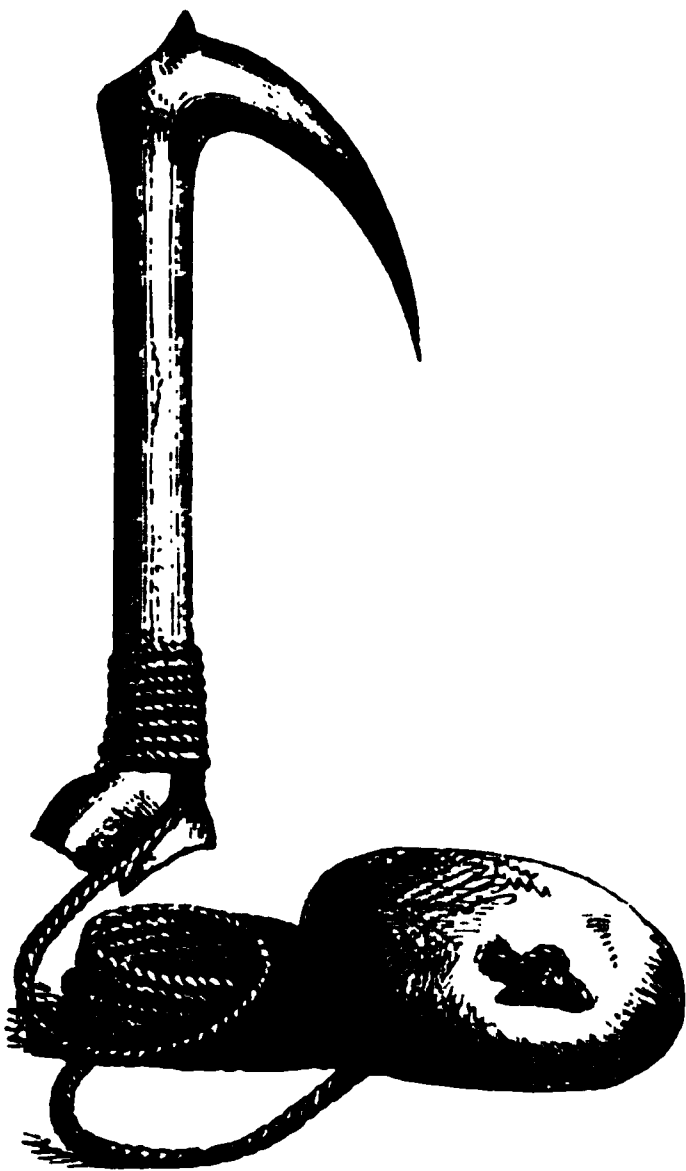
In the evening, just as we were going to sit down to dinner, one of our people, who had been bathing in the stream a short distance below our camp, came running in with the information that he had seen two bears drinking close by. We immediately sallied forth in pursuit, and B—— had the luck to fall in

* Nilghau (*Portax picta*).

with them, killing one outright with the first shot, and disabling the other, which Chineah despatched. After this little episode we dined, and sat round the camp-fire discussing the events of the day until a late hour, when we turned in, highly satisfied with our sport, for slaying a bull-nilghau single-handed with the spear is not an every-day occurrence, even in an Indian sportsman's career.

The next day we moved on to Raupoor, distance nine miles, where we pitched our tents, having heard that a herd of elephants had been seen by some Mulchers a few days before; but after a couple of days' search, during which we found no fresh trails, we advanced to Dewara, where, as we were beating a very thick and likely cover, a black panther started up from a cleft in the ground close under my feet, and I had the good fortune to roll him over with a single ball, which took effect just behind the ear. The skin was magnificent, the spots being distinctly visible when held up to the light, appearing of a deeper black than the rest. The gang declared that the black panther was a much more dangerous animal than the ordinary species; and as I had on a previous occasion seen one, that Walter M—— had wounded, charge most desperately several times, perhaps their assertion is correct. The one I killed certainly was a most formidable-looking customer, having great yellow eyes and long black whiskers, but the fur was soft and silky as velvet. The next four days afforded us no sport except an old she-bear, which was killed

by B—— and D—— whilst engaged in eating the fruit of the “mowra” tree; but I was very much struck with the singular and ingenious manner in which the Mulchers of this part of the jungle catch spotted-deer and antelope. They cut strong pieces of the creeping-bamboo about a quarter of an inch in diameter and four inches in length, leaving the curved and sharp-pointed stout thorn that grows out of the joint. In the other end of this is a notch, in



which is fastened a piece of strong fibre made from the aloe, about eighteen inches in length, to the end of which is attached a small round pebble by a hole drilled in the centre. In some parts of the jungle is found a small sweet-tasted gourd, somewhat shaped like a cucumber, and of this both spotted deer and antelope are particularly fond. The natives, being aware of the fact, bait a number

of these hooks with this fruit and throw them in the runs; the deer unsuspectingly begin to eat them, and, finding the string and pebble knocking about, they bend down their head and attempt to break it off by treading on it with their fore-feet, or striking it with

the hind. In either case, the chances are that the cord gets between the division in the hoof, and, being arrested by the stone, they are irretrievably caught, as the hook fastens in the mouth or throat, and the more they struggle the firmer they are held. They generally struggle so violently that death from exhaustion follows in a very short time, although I have seen both spotted-deer and antelope brought in alive, having been caught in this manner.

Our leave was now nearly expired, so we were obliged to commence a retrograde movement, and, having packed up our trophies, we returned to Bòwani, where Mother Garrow, a very Paphian queen, was awaiting our arrival with a formidable array of dusky nymphs. For three days we kept up a continuous nautch, and even after that time we were not tired of gazing upon the graceful pirouettes of the fair votaries of Terpsichore, or listening to the warbling of the dark-eyed songstresses, as they sang on the old subjects, "Love and War;" and, when the time came for us to take our departure, more than one shed tears as the farewell words were spoken: indeed, if "Rumour, with her many tongues," spake true, it was discovered, soon after our departure, that there were vacancies to be filled up in the pagoda of the dark, mysterious goddess.

Oh, D——, "I could a tale unfold" that would raise up a spirit on thy fireside, that all the soft sawder of thy oily tongue could never calm! But I'll spare your feelings for the sake of "Auld lang

syne," and the jolly days we spent together in the merry green woods.

We got into Trichy just in time, for two days afterwards the monsoon broke, and there was a continuous downfall of rain, which inundated the whole country.

SECTION III.—THE MOUNTAIN RANGES.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Primæval woods, and forests vast and rude,
Where reigns a deep unbroken solitude.
Eternal teaks, who 've wider stretched their arms
And deeper struck their roots amid the storms.”

THE NEILGHERRIES.

Pleasing recollections.—The deep forest described.—The pleasures and excitement of a hunter's life.—The requisite qualifications.—The Neilgherries and their productions.—Variety of game.—Ootacamund.—Englishmen and their love of sport.—Dawson's Hotel.—Burnside Cottage.—Mala-mund.—The Todas: their women, habitations, and strange customs.—News of elk.—The start: preliminaries.—The drive.—Game afoot.—A capital shot.—Three deer bite the dust, and Bruin yields up his spoils.—A stag at bay.—The return.—Convivial gathering.—The Major's story.

THE Neilgherries. How many pleasing recollections of heart-stirring events are associated with that name; how many glorious days' sport does it recall to mind; how many a dear friend does it bring before me, with whom I have bearded the tiger in his lair, tracked the mighty elephant to his haunt in the pathless forest, and there despoiled him of his trophies, or pursued the watchful ibex from crag to crag, over precipices, chasms, and ledges of rock, which men dared not look down in their cooler moments! Many

a hand I then clasped has become cold, many a voice I loved to listen to is hushed for ever ; he with whom I have often scoured the plain and struggled for the spear after the mighty grey boar, fell a shattered wreck before my eyes in the van of the fight that murky morn when "the Six Hundred" charged. There are times when the past comes before me with sadly painful distinctness, and my heart yearns to return once more to that land where I have passed the happiest years of my life, and to revisit those scenes which are engraven in my memory in strong and ineffaceable colours, although I know that my merry companions are gone, and that their places are occupied by strangers. Who among us have not some sunny spots in their existence, some remembrance of happier days gone by which they love to look back upon with pleasure, however bright future prospects may appear ? Almost all of us have some fondly cherished souvenir or trophy upon which we love to gaze and think of the past, until the soul-stirring scenes of "auld lang syne" again come vividly to mind ; and although we feel that they may never come again, we look back with pleasure upon the time when sunshine illumined our path. With some the golden age appears to have been passed at school ; with others, later in life. Here a stately old general tells of the glorious time he passed as a jolly Sub. in the days of powder and pigtails ; and there a sturdy old squire of the last generation recounts with glee the doings of his time, "when hounds could run

and huntsmen went the pace ;” yon phlegmatic looking old divine, with blanched locks and rubicund nose, which bespeaks his love of the pleasures of the table, relates, with intense satisfaction, the roistering days he spent as a young man in a fast regiment of Light Dragoons, when it was considered a “crying sin” for any one to quit the social board until he had disposed of a couple of magnums under his belt ; and that shrivelled-up old relic of mortality, who seems to stand before us as a specimen of what the hand of Time can effect on our mortal frame, will prate by the hour of the jolly dogs of his day, and the fascinations of town when he was a gay Lothario. Each and every one has some period of his life on which he loves to look back and think upon, although, perhaps, he may talk much more about the future. The soldier loves to recall to mind the scenes of many a hard-fought day ; the sailor his adventures on the heaving main ; the wanderer delights in the reminiscences of travel in many lands ; and the fox-hunter in the stiff bursts and glorious runs of bygone times ; but the sportsman who has visited the Neilgherry mountains, and stricken the mightiest denizens of the jungle, muses by day and dreams by night, of the dark, deep Wynaad forest.

Those who have never explored a primeval forest can have but a very faint conception of the mysterious effect that absence of light and intense depth of gloom have upon the human mind. The unbroken silence and utter stillness that everywhere pervades its leafy

arches, creates a strange feeling of awe and loneliness that depresses the spirits and appalls the heart of those who are unaccustomed to wander in its solitudes; and even the stoutest heart feels overpowered with a strange sensation he can neither account for nor explain the first time he enters, for the voice of man resounds with a strange and startling echo, and even the very hound whines with fear, and couches close to his master's side, afraid of being left alone. Solitude is too insufficient a term to convey an idea of the intensely overpowering sensation of desolation and loneliness that pervades these regions; yet, to the hunter, who is accustomed to sojourn in their deepest recesses, the wilderness is a home which he would not exchange for any other; and as he roams through its boundless expanse of verdure, with no other companions but the silent trackers and his dogs, and no guide but a pocket-compass and certain jungle signs not to be understood by the dwellers of cities, he imbibes certain feelings that cannot be entered into save by those who have themselves experienced the charms and fascinations of "forest life," and enjoyed its pure and heart-felt pleasures. To him it possesses a peculiar spell, not to be found elsewhere; and, far away from the haunts of man, he gives no care to the turmoil and bustle of the busy world, but loves to study Nature in her grandest forms, and silent unsullied beauty, whilst his heart glows with thoughts that bear him untiring company. There is a peculiarly exhilarating delight, passing all description, in

the wild excitement of this life, which dispels all anxiety, and strengthens the mental and physical energies for the ever-changing scene, delights the eye, and gives pleasure to the intellect; whilst, at the same time, the constant excitement arising from the varied incidents of such a state of existence invigorates the mind and stimulates the powers of thought and observation. The body, sustained in continued exertion by constant exercise, enables the hunter to maintain his course for days together through the pathless woods, with that dogged stubbornness and inflexibility which is necessary to ensure success in the pursuit of the game he seeks. He moves noiselessly along, without a care as to what he may encounter, for he has implicit confidence in the power of his trusty rifle; and his vigilant eye, piercing the shadowy depths of the jungle, leaves no hollow unsearched, for he and his followers are dependent for their subsistence on their exertions in the chase. Nothing is so conducive to the keen development of the senses as the constant exertion of the different faculties during a sojourn in the jungle; quickness of eye (an indispensable quality in a hunter) and unceasing watchfulness are there attained; habits of observation are engendered, for anything out of the common immediately attracts attention, and the ear is habituated to catch the slightest sound. The hunter should have a thorough knowledge of the habits of the wild animals he seeks, bearing in mind how suspicious they are, and how quickly their attention is attracted by unusual noises,

strange traces in the jungle, or even the taint in the air which the presence of man always leaves behind it. The ranger of the forest experiences a thorough feeling of independence and a freedom from restraint in these wilds, that contrasts most favourably with the *désagréments* of artificial existence, and few of those who are fitted to enjoy it ever quit these scenes to return to civilized life without deep feelings of regret that their unalloyed pleasures are at an end; and in after life the murmuring of waters and the sighings of the wind through the trees will recall to mind moments of intense interest, and they will ever feel at heart that there is no music so sweet as the wild voices of the woods.

All forests are gloomy, but they have their comparative degrees of shade, and none present a greater diversity of appearance than that round the Neilgherries. The tall feathery bamboo contrasts most delightfully with the stately teak, ebony, blackwood, and other gigantic trees of the primeval forest, where the air, being confined, is generally close and suffocating. The surface of the ground is everywhere thickly strewn with decayed leaves or dead branches, and underneath the trees may be seen the green of young seedlings which spring up by thousands during the rains, but for the most part pine and die, being deprived of light and heat.

The climate on the table-land is about the finest in the known world; exempt alike from the extremes of heat and cold, it realizes as near as any land "eternal

spring," for its great elevation (8000 feet above the level of the sea) tempers the heat generally felt in these latitudes, and gives the air a pureness and bracing elasticity peculiarly grateful to Europeans after a lengthened sojourn in the scorching plains; indeed, if cloudless skies, continual sunshine, and pleasant weather were the only essentials to human happiness, the Neilgherries would be the most likely place to seek it of any that I have yet met with in my wanderings over land and sea.

In its peculiar style of beauty nothing can exceed the scenery of the hills. Stupendous peaks, groups of gigantic forest-trees, hanging woods and foaming cascades, alternate with clumps of rhododendrons, covered with crimson bloom, wild camellias, jessamines, and high waving ferns, whilst vines and other climbing-plants hang in festoons from branch to branch; and here and there the landscape is diversified with verdant lawns of velvet turf, natural parterres of scarlet geranium, or orchids of luxuriant growth. Where a view of the low country can be caught through an opening in the thick woods, it is equally grand and impressive, for a blue haze spreads over the scene, softening and blending its beauties, and giving it a dreamy appearance peculiarly enchanting. Wild raspberries and strawberries, noted for their excellent flavour, are to be found everywhere in the woods; and the ferns, buttercups, and daisies, that grow on the banks of the numerous rills and burns that flow rippling on every side, present a

similarity of appearance that recalls visions of dear old England. Birds of gaudy plumage dart amid the branches, gay butterflies hover about, insects of metallic hue glitter on the leaves, and all nature seems glad in this highly-favoured spot.

With the exception of the Himalaya, I have never yet met with any hunting-grounds to be compared to the great Wynaad Jungle for diversity of game, which includes elephants, bison, elk, spotted-deer, jungle-sheep, hog-deer, tigers, panthers, leopards, cheetas, bears, hyenas, tiger-cats, boars, wolves, jackals, wild dogs, porcupines, hares, pea-fowl, jungle-fowl, spur-fowl, partridges, quail, and snipe, whilst on the hills are found ibex and woodcock, which are never seen in the low country.

Ootacamund, the principal station, is the most delightful place of residence in Hindostan. It possesses a handsome church, well-established club, two first-rate hotels, several handsome shops, which are chiefly kept by Parsees, a well-stocked bazaar, and many hundred excellent houses and bungalows, some of which are perfect mansions. The cantonment occupies a great extent of ground, as the country, being extremely undulating, most of the houses are picturesquely situated on slight eminences, and surrounded with large gardens which are generally extremely well kept up. Apples, pears, quinces, peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, currants, and most European vegetables, thrive well; whilst fuchsias, honeysuckles, woodbine, jessamine, clematis, passion-

flowers, and geraniums, grow in the wildest luxuriance, and require little care. In the centre of the cantonment is a beautiful artificial lake, round which is the drive or promenade, the "Rotten Row" of Ooty, where in the afternoon may be seen several hundred Anglo-Indians, either on horseback or in vehicles of every description, from the stylish barouche to the humble "bullock-garree," listening to the band or driving about to gain an appetite for dinner.

The Neilgherries being considered among the healthiest spots in Southern India, have been constituted a sanitarium; and here may be seen invalid officers from all parts of the Madras and Bombay Presidencies, who have obtained leave of absence from their regiments, for periods varying from six months to two years, in order to recruit their health, during which time they draw their full pay and allowances, which, from some stupid fancy of the East India Board, is not the case when they are obliged to return to Europe. The consequence is that Ooty somewhat resembles a fast watering-place, and is extremely gay; balls, parties, and picnics being of common occurrence.

Surrounded by splendid hunting-grounds, it is the head-quarters of sportsmen; for wherever there is anything to hunt that promises sport, Englishmen are sure to set out in pursuit. As a nation we are essentially sportsmen, for the chase in all its branches seems indigenous to the country. Taking, for

example, the officers of our army and navy, who are scattered all over the face of the globe, thousands of miles from their native land, we find that neither a burning sun and the enervating influence of a tropical climate, nor an icy temperature, can damp their ardour for field-sports, which, notwithstanding every disadvantage, they endeavour to keep up. Such being the case, it is not surprising that in Ooty there is a well-established subscription pack of hounds for hunting the fox and jackal, besides several private ones of beagles, spaniels, and cockers for driving the covers. In no part of Great Britain are woodcock more eagerly followed than on the hills, and every year large sums of money change hands in wagers as to what sportsman will kill the first cock. The season begins in October and ends in March, although solitary birds may be found a month earlier or later.

On my first arrival, Ooty was very full ; and, as vacant bungalows were scarce, I put up for some time at Dawson's Hotel, where I had every reason to be highly satisfied with the accommodation, for my quarters were extremely comfortable, and the living first-rate : indeed I have seldom come across such a *cuisine*. There was certainly only another like it on the Madras side, that of the Club of Secunderabad, where the mighty Tatiah ruled the roast.

Having all my establishment with me, including my celebrated hunting-gang, which comprised some of the best trackers in the country, my old chum

B—— and I took a snug, compact little box called Burnside Cottage, with good stabling, outhouses for servants, and a well-stocked garden ; which was most delightfully situated just below the crest of a hill, and overlooking the glen of the Mala-mund, a village inhabited by the Todas, a strange race of people, who are supposed by some to be a remnant of “the lost tribes.” The men are generally above the common height, well made, athletic, and with open, prepossessing countenances. They have a decidedly Jewish type of nose, large Oriental eyes, fine teeth, and oval faces, the lower part of which is generally covered with a fine jet-black beard. They wear no head-dress, but the hair, which grows in great profusion, is parted in the centre, and flows in curls all round the head. Their dress consists of a waist-cloth and a kind of cotton sheet, which they wear like a Roman *toga*, thrown over the body, leaving the arms and legs bare. The men are decidedly the finest-looking race in Hindostan, having a noble and independent bearing, and none of that cringing and fawning obsequiousness which is observable in every other caste of native. The women are tall and commanding, with figures for the most part faultless ; erect but remarkably graceful, somewhat slight perhaps, but exquisitely rounded ; every line full of softness and beauty, every limb in fine symmetry, supple, and delicate. The head is peculiarly small and elegant, the face oval, and generally of the Israelitish type. The features are small and finely chiselled ; the mouth beautifully

formed, and graced with pearl-like teeth; the eyes large, lustrous, wild, soft and gazelle-like; the eyebrows are much arched and finely pencilled; the lashes very long and full; the hair of the head abundant, full of natural waves, and flowing in ringlets over the neck and shoulders. Their skins, of a softness beyond that of other women, are of a rich, clear, olive colour, several shades lighter than the men, in consequence of less exposure to the weather; and their hands and feet are comparatively small and beautifully formed. They arrive at maturity at a very early age, and it is no uncommon thing to see outside the huts a pretty little girl, under twelve years of age, with an infant on her hip; but as they arrive speedily to womanhood, so their beauty decays; at sixteen they are in the prime of life, and at thirty aged, when they retain no trace of their former beauty. The women have a plurality of husbands, the brothers of a family generally marrying one wife, which practice is also common among the Nairs and other castes on the western coast. Their huts are built in the shape of the tilt of a waggon, of bamboos thatched with turf. They are about ten feet long, seven broad, and six high, and the door (the only aperture in the building) is only about two feet square, so that the inhabitants have to crawl in and out on all fours. Half a dozen huts constitute a "mund" or village, which is generally situated on the side of a hill, in the most picturesque spots on the hills. They are a pastoral people, possessing large

herds of the finest buffaloes in India ; having a strange language of their own, but no character to express it. The men sometimes wear small gold earrings, and the women silver or brass armlets, and a rude kind of zone, which is worn loosely round the hips. The Toda men call themselves the lords of the soil, and look down with supreme contempt upon the Burghers, another hill race, who are of inferior stature, and cultivate the ground, for which they have to pay the former a certain tribute.

One morning as B—— and I were engaged in superintending the laying out of a piece of ground as an addition to our kitchen-garden, a Toda, to whom I had one day paid some slight attention, came to inform us that he had seen a large herd of elk in a wooded ravine about three miles distant. I immediately wrote off to Major S——, who had a pack of dogs, and W——, K——, C——, and B——, then staying at Dawson's, informing them of the news ; and in half an hour they all assembled in their hunting-togs at my crib, with two or three other fellows whom they had picked up *en route*. In the meantime, Chineah, my head "shekarry," had mustered the gang, with a dozen extra beaters ; and after having partaken of some refreshment we mounted our nags, and accompanied by horsekeepers and gun-bearers, set off for the cover under the guidance of the Toda. An hour's ride brought us to the spot, and, dismounting, we reconnoitred the ground, so as to make sure the game had not stolen away. No

slots were seen to lead us to suppose this had been the case, so we took post along the edges of the cover, whilst the gang-beaters and dogs descended the ravine by a circuitous route, so as to drive the game up the hill, and force it to break towards that side where we were lying concealed. I also ordered the Gooroo and Ali to remain with my Polygar dogs on the high ground, so as to be ready in case any of the deer should get away wounded, which afterwards turned out a lucky hit. After nearly half an hour's suspense, certain sounds issued from below which informed us that the beaters and dogs had entered the lower end of the cover, and presently a low yelp told us that one of the pack had taken up the scent. "Hark to old Ponto!" cried the Major, who was ensconced behind a rhododendron bush a few paces from me; and a smile of contentment gleamed over the time-worn and weather-beaten physiognomy of the old sportsman as he recognized the voice of his favourite hound. "Hush! hark! there he goes again. The game's afoot, take my word for it. He never gives tongue without a cause, so pass the word along the line to keep a bright look-out. There goes Rupert and Gelert chiming in." Shortly after this prelude, hound after hound opened on scent and took up the cry, until at last the harmonious chorus burst forth from the ravine, and awoke the echoes of the surrounding woods. I need not describe to sportsmen the intense excitement and pleasurable sensations this melody raised in our hearts, for we knew that the deer

were afoot, and each internally wished that they might break sufficiently near to give him a shot. From time to time the crashing of branches informed us that the herd were close at hand, and each prepared to raise his deadly weapon, but again and again they broke back. At last, an enormous buck-elk, with widely-spreading antlers, summoned resolution to leave the cover, and came tearing through the bushes with mighty elastic bounds, some distance to my right, and within easy range of W—— and K——, who let drive double shots with apparently little effect, for he continued his course without relaxing his speed for a moment. I tried to get a shot as he was bounding away, but could not catch sight of him, on account of intervening bushes, when the old Major, who was quietly seated on his right heel, with his left knee thrown well forward, and his left elbow resting upon it (the best position for steady shooting), let fly right and left; and although I could not see the stag, I knew from the double “thuds” I heard that both shots had taken effect. “Hurrah! he’s down, boys!” vociferated the gallant old soldier, as he sprang to his feet, and picked up his second rifle: but before he could raise it the stag had regained his legs, and a slight undulation in the ground prevented his getting another shot. “Bravo, Major!” I exclaimed; “you ‘wiped the youngster’s eyes’ beautifully, and made a couple of excellent shots, for both were over two hundred yards distant. We will now loose Hassan and Ali, and I’ll warrant you they will soon give a

good account of the quarry." I accordingly gave the necessary orders to lay in the dogs, when just at the moment I heard a crash in the jungle, and two young bucks with velvety horns, and seven does, broke cover, followed by an old she-bear. I brought down one of the bucks, and three of the does fell before a combined volley, whilst the bear received two or three gentle reminders of our presence that did anything but increase her stock of good-humour, for she growled most savagely, and made a serious charge at W—— and K——, who could only give leg-bail, as their rifles were empty. Luckily the dogs caught sight of her, and Hassan seized her by the hind-leg, which brought her up, and gave Ali the opportunity of pinning her by the ear on the opposite side. Both were immensely powerful dogs (a cross between the blood-hound and Polygar), and poor Bruin stood no chance of doing mischief, although she seemed most maliciously inclined. As soon as I came up I called off the dogs, and B—— gave her her a *coup de grace* behind the ear. The beaters and the Major's pack now made their appearance; and after the dogs had been collected, I laid Ali and Hassan on the trail of the stag that had been wounded by the Major. Large drops of blood marked his course; and, as we were following it up, a loud, deep bellow in a patch of high fern close at hand, told us the stag was at bay. When we came up we found him covered with blood and foam, struggling desperately with the dogs, who had seized him by the throat and held him fast. His

bloodshot eyes rolled savagely as we approached, and he lowered his head, as if to make a stroke at us with his horns; but he was weak from loss of blood, and stumbled, which gave Chineah the opportunity of drawing his knife across his throat, when he made a feeble attempt to regain his knees, but staggered, reeled, and fell, uttering a deep groan. A convulsive tremor passed over his limbs, and all was still.

As soon as the venison was broken up, and slung upon poles, we mounted our nags and returned to Ooty, where we all met round Major S——'s social board in the evening, when, after the cloth was removed, songs went round, and many animated recitals of hair-breadth escapes and perilous encounters with the grim monsters of the forest were related by the old hands, which caused our sitting to last until a late hour. Just as we were about to separate, W—— happened to mention something about a cantonment ball that was to take place shortly; when our worthy host, pricking up his ears, asked if any of us had heard of the direful effects matrimony had upon Geordie S——, a connection of his. "He was before your time, but no one who knew could ever forget him, for a better or keener sportsman never breathed. It was a pleasure to see him dashing across country after the grey boar, or hear his merry laugh, pithy saying, and jolly song, in the evening, round the camp-fire when the sports of the day were over. 'A change came o'er the spirit of my dream,' Geordie got 'touched,' was led to the altar, 'tied up;' and I met

him again after a lapse of years—but oh! how changed! The jovial sunburnt face had become long; his laughing eyes, that once beamed with mirth, shot out melancholy glances; the formerly strong arm had become flabby; and the legs no better than broomsticks! He received me kindly as ever, but looked, I must own, rather sheepish and glum. After some conversation, in which I brought ‘old times’ to his recollection, he brightened up a little, his old smile returned, and for a moment he looked somewhat like himself again. It was but a temporary glimmer, for a shrill harsh voice in an adjoining chamber, followed by a smart slap and a lengthened squall, reminded him of his wretched situation; and as I rose to avoid meeting his (can I say?) *better* half, who was evidently getting herself up for the occasion, he pressed my hand in his old affectionate manner, muttering with a deeply-drawn sigh, ‘S——, my dear fellow, you see the unfortunate mistake I made, and what it has brought me to; take warning, steer clear of wedlock, and you’ll be a happy man.’ ‘I’ll be —— if I don’t,’ I replied, feeling at the same time a choking sensation in the throat, as I mounted my nag, and rode off just as the temptress was sailing into the room.” After a hearty laugh at the Major’s anecdote, we bade him good-night, and each made his way home.

CHAPTER XIV.

“Trampling his path through wood and brake,
And canes which, crackling, fall before his way,
And tassel-grass, whose silvery feathers play,
O’erlapping the young trees,
On comes the elephant to slake
His thirst at noon in yon pellucid spring.”

ELEPHANT-HUNTING IN THE FOREST AROUND THE BASE OF THE NEILGHERRIES.

The elephant-hunter’s qualifications, “Mighty Hunters.”—The start.—The Coonoor Pass.—The trail.—Signs of a tusker.—The herd.—A bull-elephant dies.—A cow and calf fall.—The bivouac.

ANY sportsman who is a fair shot, cool, steady, persevering, and active, may count upon killing heavy bags of most kinds of game with tolerable certainty; but he who would slay the elephant in his trackless jungle-home must have other qualities combined, or he will fail in his attempt.

The elephant-hunter must have a thorough knowledge of the nature and habits of that sagacious animal, whose keenly-developed senses far exceed that of any other denizen of the forest; he must be well acquainted with its peculiar structure and anatomy, or his bullet, however true, will never reach the vital part with any certainty; he must be an adept at “tracking,” or following spoor, and

in the understanding of *jungle signs*, which, although a natural gift to the red men of the Far West and Indian jungle-tribes, is only acquired by intense study and long practice; he must be patient and enduring, satisfied with hard fare and short commons, as he will often have to subsist wholly upon his gun, with the ground for his bed, and a forest tree for his canopy. He should feel with the great poet, that "There is a pleasure in the pathless woods," and "society where none intrudes;" for he must often be content with nature and his own thoughts as companions, and he must not let his spirits be depressed by the solitude and intense stillness of the deep jungle.

The hunter must sleep like a hare, always on the alert, ever prepared and watchful; for he never knows what he may meet, or the danger a moment may bring forth. Inured to peril, he must never be cast-down or faint of heart; or he had better not attempt to follow up the spoor of the elephant to his haunts in the dense, deep jungle, where the rays of the sun seldom penetrate, and the woodman's axe was never heard—where the deadliest of fevers lurk in places the most beautiful to the eye; and where, with the exception of certain times in the year, the air and the water are poisoned by malaria, and impregnated by the exhalations of decayed leaves and decomposed vegetable matter, entailing certain death to the hunter, were he tempted to follow up his perilous calling out of season.

Notwithstanding the danger of elephant-hunting, it has ever been a favourite sport amongst the covenanted servants and officers of the Indian army ; and the names of Oswell, Rogers, Godfrey, Garrow, Michael, and one or two others, are "as familiar as household words" throughout India, on account of their numerous daring feats and perilous escapades.

Sometimes herds of elephants are tempted to roam, and leave their homes in the deep jungle to devastate the sugar-cane plantations and rice-fields of the ryots, where they commit great damage ; and on such occasions the Anglo-Indian sportsman is enabled to get amongst them without being obliged to penetrate the dense forests so pernicious to health.

One evening, on my return to my domicile at Ooty from a very jovial pic-nic given by P——, a sporting collector of Coimbatore, at the celebrated Dodabetta Peak (which rises to the height of 8700 feet above the plains), Chineah, my head shekarry, informed me that a party of Mulchers whom I had sent out to look for game, had come up from the low country with the news that a herd of elephants had been seen near the Colunda nullah, a small mountain-stream a few miles to the north-east of the hills.

My gang did not need any orders to prepare ; for, as I entered the garden, I found them all assembled in front of the gate in full shekar costume, ready to start, and many a knowing look and broad grin they gave me as I passed to don my leather hunting-gear and prepare my battery and ammunition. The

cylindro-conical bullets of my rifle, as well as the round ones I used in the smooth-bores, were made of a mixture of lead and zinc, which amalgamation I prefer to any other for elephant-shooting, as leaden balls are too soft, and flatten on striking a bone, and brass balls, which are generally used, are too light to carry truly. My preparations did not take long to make, and in the course of a few minutes I mounted my favourite nag, "Gooty," accompanied by Chineah, Googooloo, Mootoo, and the Gooroo, carrying my guns, axes, spears, telescope, &c., a couple of Mulchers to show the road, and a horse-keeper, who led a baggage-tattoo, loaded with a large "combeley" blanket, which served either as a covering or a tent, as occasion required, a change of clothing, some prog and tobacco.

The moon was favourable, being at its zenith as we passed the village of Coonor, making the night clear as day, and allowing us to enjoy the magnificent scenery of the celebrated Coonor Pass, where "fern flowers and grasses creep, fantastically tangled," amid gigantic forest-trees, and the graceful bamboo contrasts with the darker foliage of the wild fig, and thickets of rhododendron and wild camellias. The wave-like looking sea of deep forest was diversified with white lichen-covered precipices, and darkly-frowning crags of every imaginable form and shape, some thousands of feet in height, which seemed to shake their fern-fringed foreheads at the passing traveller as he followed the winding road leading down

the ravine, every bend of which, like a turn of the kaleidoscope, revealed something new and pleasing to the eye.

Upon the summit of a rugged and almost inaccessible peak, which cast its dark shadow on our path, is the small hill-fort, Hulli kul Droog, built by Hyder Ali, which long since has been abandoned to the birds and beasts of the forest.

As I rode along I frequently heard the sharp bark of the elk above the murmur of the mountain-stream, which glistened like silver in the rays of the moon as it glided over rounded masses of granite and smooth angular pieces of green-stone, or leaping in little cascades, dashed foaming down the deep ravine; and at times I distinguished the distant hoarse roar of the tiger reverberating through the woods, which was immediately followed by a dismal howling chorus from a troop of jackals.

It was past midnight when we arrived at the bungalow at Metrapolliam, a village on the right bank of the river Bowani, and, after a few hours' repose, we started for the place where the elephants were said to be, just as the first streaks of grey in the east proclaimed the dawn of day, a tramp of about twelve miles, some part of the way through very dense jungle, brought us to the huts of a Mulcher tribe, where I left my horse and baggage-pony under the care of the horse-keeper, as they could hardly make their way through the bush.

The Mulchers gave us to understand that the herd

could not be at any great distance, as some of their tribe had seen them the evening before, in a valley close to the foot of the hills, and they had been heard trumpeting during the night.

We rested for an hour, and broke our fast by the side of a beautiful little stream, which we followed for some distance, when the Mulcher who served as our guide pointed out to us the spoor of an elephant about three days old, and shortly afterwards we came upon the trail of a herd of eight, which I made out to be about twenty-four hours old.

It was now noon, and the rays of the sun were intensely hot, so we sat down for an hour under a tree, whilst the Gooroo and the Mulcher went to consult with some of the tribe, whom he had left watching the movements of the herd. They returned shortly, accompanied by two other Mulchers, who informed us that they had seen a herd, consisting of a tusker, eight females, and some young ones, passing over one of the lower spurs branching off the Neilgherries the evening before; and under their guidance we soon came upon their trail, which consisted of several footprints of all dimensions, from six to twelve or fourteen inches in diameter.

I held a brief consultation with the gang, and it determined *nem. con.* to follow up the spoor as expeditiously as possible; so we continued on trail through dense jungle, over hills, and almost impenetrable ravines, until the sun had almost sunk below the western horizon, when we collected some dry

logs, made a fire to keep off the tigers, &c., distributed some provisions and tobacco, and turned in, two keeping watch by turns whilst the others slept, until the moon had risen high enough to enable us to see the spoor, and continue the pursuit.

A sloth bear (*Prochilus labiatus*) and a half-grown cub were descried by the Gooroo as we went along, and a bull-bison was heard bellowing in a thicket close by; but we left them unmolested, continuing our course by the track made by the herd bursting through the jungle, and treading down the brushwood otherwise impenetrable. Huge boughs and branches had been broken off, and trees uprooted or torn up in their passage; in places they had remained for some time browsing on the young wood, tender branches, and succulent plants, and as we passed a watercourse, it was evident from the marks that some of their number had been rolling in the sand.

Here it was I made sure that there was a bull in the herd with large ivories; for I perceived marks in the bank where he had thrust his tusks under the root of a large jungle-tree, covered with creeping oleaster, full of rich bunches of sour scarlet plums, which had resisted all his efforts to tear up.

I saw, from the freshness of the spoor, and other traces which remained, that we had gained very considerably upon the herd, and, as we all felt rather fatigued, we lay down to repose for a couple of hours, continuing our course when the day broke.

Towards noon, after crossing several densely-

wooded ravines, and rocky hills, where the elephant, in spite of his great weight, scarcely leaves any trace, the spoor being only indicated by a broken leaf, bruised twig, or a lately-upturned stone, we entered some thick bamboo jungle, and here we found a "jheel," or swamp, where they had remained during the night, and which bore traces of having been very recently occupied. The trail was warm.

Being inspired with fresh vigour, fatigue was forgotten, and after having made our way through a wide ravine, and crossed a stony watercourse, where the spoor was certainly not an hour old, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, we began to ascend a long ridge of low rocky hills; a difficult route, one would think, for such unwieldy-looking animals, but the spoor was plain, so on we went; and after an hour's clambering up a steep and rather difficult ledge of rocks, we arrived at the summit, where I had the indescribable pleasure of beholding the broad backs of the objects of our search, who were quietly browsing, unconscious of danger, under the shade of some tall forest trees. I sent Moottoo, the Gooroo, and the Mulchers to a high peak, by a circuitous route, from whence they would be enabled to watch the movements of the herd, should they take alarm. After resting for a few moments to reconnoitre the ground and take breath, and having tried the wind, which was favourable, a light air blowing from them to us, I carefully examined my guns, ascertained that the powder was well up in the nipples, and then stole

gently forward, taking advantage of any cover or undulation I could find, until I got behind a thick tree, with a patch of low bush at the foot, from whence I could distinctly see the herd about sixty yards distant. The tusker was standing on three legs, swinging his huge carcase to and fro, and fanning himself with the branch of a tree, which he held in his trunk, and near him two females were reposing, whilst several others were standing a short distance off.

I remained a few minutes to make sure that I was well to leeward, and not in any immediate danger of being discovered by their remarkably keen scent, and then making signs to Googooloo to remain concealed I crept forward with my rifle, followed by Chineah, carrying my other two big guns.

After some very careful and exciting stalking I reached a tree about thirty paces from the group, which, unconscious of our approach, were still in the same position, and taking a moment to draw breath, and wipe my eyes from the perspiration which streamed down my forehead, I crept under the cover of some low bush to a clump of bamboos, within pistol-shot of the tusker ; which I had hardly reached when I saw that I was discovered, for one of the females sprang up suddenly with a strange wild cry, and rushed a few paces forward, tail on end. The bull also made a simultaneous movement, stretching out his trunk with a grunt to catch the wind, and giving me a fair shot—not a second was to be lost—

I threw up my rifle, took a deliberate and steady aim at the hollow above the trunk (which is about the size of a saucer) in the centre of his forehead, and pulled the trigger; a heavy fall immediately followed, but before the smoke had cleared away, and I could see the result of my shot, the female rushed frantically forward, nearly capsizing me in her course, and tore up a wild date within three yards of the spot where I was standing.

As she did not appear, however, to notice me, but went off trumpeting in an opposite direction to that taken by the rest of the herd, I did not molest her at the time, for I felt too anxious to secure the tusker, whom I found stone-dead, with his fore-legs doubled under him, his hind ones stretched out, and his tusks deeply embedded in the ground with the fall.

I had hardly made sure of his being dead when Googooloo called my attention by a signal, and turning round I saw my quondam friend, the female who gave the alarm, helping a young one over some rough ground about a couple of hundred yards distant. As she was going off at a shuffling trot that forbade any hope I might have of overtaking her, I took a steady aim at the young one, hitting it severely and rolling it over; the smoke had scarcely cleared away, and I had just snatched a loaded gun from Chineah (who ran like a cat up a tree) when down she came on me with a hoarse roar of vengeance. I let her charge to within twenty paces from me, when I gave her a *right and left* full in the forehead, which

stopped her career, and brought her to her knees, and Googooloo, who stood steadily by my side, handed me my second gun, with which I gave her a "*finisher*" as she was attempting to regain her legs. A convulsive tremor passed over her body, and all was still.

I reloaded the guns, and despatched the young one, which could hardly drag itself along, and as there was no other tusker in the herd, I did not care to follow it up further, so I gave directions to Chineah and the rest of the gang, who came up, to build a hut, whilst I and Googooloo went out to try and kill a deer for food; but after a hard fag our only bag was a large porcupine, a peafowl, a wild cat, and three black monkeys, which latter proved very acceptable to the Mulchers.

On my return to the gang, I found a very comfortable hut constructed, a soft bed of leaves prepared, and a tolerably savoury dish ready for me, consisting of an elephant's foot baked in a paste of clay amongst the embers; after having partaken of which, a large fire was made, and we all sat round enjoying "the fragrant narcotic weed," whilst the Gooroo and Chineah by turns chanted an extemporaneous song in a very monotonous tone, commemorating the exploits of the day, and all the rest took up the chorus.

Being very tired, and perhaps not musically inclined at the time, I fell asleep, and did not awake until broad daylight the next morning, when I found the gang busily employed with their axes in cutting out the tusks, which weighed ninety-four pounds the

pair. This job took them about six hours, so that it was nearly noon before we commenced our homeward route, and late at night when we arrived at the Mulcher huts, where we had left the horses. There we slept, returning to Ooty the night afterwards.

CHAPTER XV.

“Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious Court?”

SHAKESPEARE.

THE NEILGHERRIES AND THE KOONDAH.

News of a tiger.—His last depredation.—The ambuscade.—Lying in wait.—A night attack.—Exciting moments.—The spoiler vanquished.—The return.—News of ibex, and an expedition to the Koondah range.—The start.—Ibex stalking.—Description of the ibex of the Neilgherries.—The Kudiakad peak.—The mountain-side.—A quiet shot.—Out-manœuvring a sentinel.—Game on the ground.—A long shot.—Game recovered under difficulties.

TIME passed most pleasantly on the hills, for the days were spent in exploring-parties and field sports of every description; the evenings in social gatherings, enlivened by the presence of female society; and the nights in deliciously sound repose, which in itself is one of the greatest luxuries an Anglo-Indian can enjoy, for in the low country, during the hot season, the insupportably close and oppressive period between sunset and early dawn is more distressing and enervating than the intense heat of the day; for during this time not a breath of air agitates the branches of the highest trees, candles burn in the open air without flickering, the atmosphere is suffocatingly

close, and unless the punkah is kept continually going the European can obtain no sleep, but tosses about restlessly on his couch, and gets up in the morning feeling as weary, tired, and overcome with lassitude, as when he lay down. This want of rest is more trying to our soldiers than any privation or fatigue they may experience during their sojourn in tropical climates; and of late years officers commanding regiments have been empowered by the Indian Government to employ coolies to keep the punkahs going day and night during the hot months, which has been found to have an extremely salutary effect. One day I was superintending the manufacture of a batch of "goorakoo"* for my hookah, according to a recipe I obtained from one of the retainers of Mah-rajah Chundalal, the late Dewan of the Deccan, when Chineah came with the intelligence that a tiger had struck down a bullock belonging to some Mulchers about five miles distant, and after having sucked the blood had left the carcass, which Naga and Googooloo had gone to watch, to prevent

* Goorakoo, from the Sanscrit word "goor," sugar, and the Telugoo "akoo," a leaf, is the compound used in the hookah. The following is the best recipe I ever met with:—"Take of tobacco four seers (16 lbs.), common treacle four seers, wood-apple (*Feronia elephantum*) half a seer, preserved apples, plantains or pine-apple, half a seer, raisins half a seer, and 'goolgund' (conserve of roses) half a seer. Pound these ingredients well together in a large wooden mortar, adding cardamoms, sandal-wood, otto of roses and spikenard, according as you want it more or less scented. When it is well mixed, and has assumed the consistency of a thick paste, add a seer of dried rose-leaves, then put it in an earthen pot, the mouth of which must be made perfectly air-tight by being waxed over, and bury it for three months, after which it is ready for use."

its being carried away by the chucklars (shoemakers), or pariahs (low caste people).

B—— had gone out to reconnoitre some ibex ground on the Koondah range, and as I did not expect him to return until late in the evening, I made preparations to start alone. Tiffin eaten, I set out for the spot, accompanied by Chineah, the Gooroo, and a horse-keeper who carried my rifles, and after an hour's ride arrived at a little patch of cultivation surrounded on three sides by dense wood, where we found a fine white bullock lying dead in a pool of blood, with his throat torn and shoulder dislocated. I saw at a glance that the marauder was a large tiger, for besides the holes made in the throat by his fangs, and the marks of his claws in the back of the neck, which had torn up the flesh in ridges, there were several immense "pugs" deeply imprinted in the soft ground, near which the struggle had taken place.

Googooloo and Naga had built an ambuscade in a tree, about ten feet from the ground, which commanded an excellent view of all approaches from the cover; but as I did not imagine that the tiger would return to his prey in the earlier part of the evening, and I should not have the advantage of the light of the moon until late, I determined to await his approach at close quarters, and made the gang dig a hole about four feet deep under a low overhanging bush, much overgrown with creepers and parasitical plants, which was about half a dozen paces to leeward of the carcass.

By making my place of concealment in the ground, I knew I should have a better chance of getting a sight of the tiger and taking more certain aim in the dark than if I was perched in a tree above him, besides which it seemed something more like *fair play*. Having lined my place of ambuscade with a carpet, so as to make it more comfortable, I carefully loaded my weapons, which were two double ten-bore rifles, a double two-ounce gun, and a brace of large double holster-pistols; arranged my comforts for the inner man, consisting of a stone bottle of strong green tea, a flask of brandy and a huge pile of sandwiches; and ordered all my followers to return to Ooty, with the horse, excepting Chineah and Googooloo, who were to keep watch in the tree so as to be at hand in case they might be wanted.

All being prepared, as soon as the shadows of evening began to lengthen we took post, and during the few remaining hours of daylight I carefully noted every bush and undulation in the ground, so as to be better able to perceive anything in the dark. As the day declined, the last rays of an unclouded sunset threw a rich purple haze over the whole scene, and the many-tinted foliage of the surrounding woods glistened with golden tints in the light of departing day.

The tuneful songsters ceased their warbling, and the woods no longer resounded with the sharp strokes of the woodpecker; but the night-hawk was on the wing, and darted swiftly to and fro after the moths,

which at that hour were flitting about in great numbers. The air became redolent with the fragrance of numberless flowering shrubs, which seemed to emit a double perfume towards the close of day. The evening deepened into twilight, the twilight darkened into night, and the stars with their mild radiance seemed as if they strove to eclipse the lingering rays of sunset. At length the mighty forest became silent, and no sound reached our ears save the occasional chirping of a cricket, the dismal hooting of the horned owl, the howling of troops of jackals, or the melancholy booming of the great hill-monkey. As the night wore on, the tall trees could hardly be distinguished one behind another, as they loomed, darker and darker, against an indefinable background.

Time passed slowly, the night air became chilly, and at last I began to fancy the tiger, having satiated his thirst with blood, had no intention of returning for the flesh (a frequent occurrence); so I wrapped myself up more closely in my "combeley" (a blanket made of goats' hair, impermeable to wet), and set to work at my pile of sandwiches and cold tea, with occasional nips of brandy, when suddenly I thought I caught the sound of a rustling of leaves, followed by the snapping of a dry twig. I set down the bottle of tea I was in the act of raising to my mouth, noiselessly grasped my rifle, which I raised with the muzzle directed towards the spot from whence I thought the noise proceeded, and listened attentively,

but I heard nothing save the palpitations of my own heart that seemed to be thumping violently against my side ; and as to seeing anything, it was out of the question, for the night was so dark and gloomy that I could scarcely even recognise the outline of the dead bullock. A long, anxious hour passed, and I repeatedly heard the tearing of flesh and crunching of bones close in front of me, but the sky was so overcast that I could not distinguish anything, although now and then I caught sight of a pair of greenish looking eyes, and heard a low purring. At last, finding there was no prospect of getting a fair shot, I resolved to risk a chance one, and having waited until I again caught sight of his eyes, I gave a whistle, which immediately attracted his attention, for he raised up his head, uttering a low, savage snarl, and I saw his eyeballs glare as if he was peering through the gloom in my direction. This was the opportunity I wanted—I took deliberate aim between the glittering orbs that shone like burning coals, and pulled both triggers almost simultaneously. A hoarse roar followed the double report, which was re-echoed by the distant hills—something dark passed overhead, and I heard a crashing and rending of wood in the bush immediately behind me, with a loud whine and peculiar grunt, which told me that the tiger was hard hit.

I grasped my second gun, stuck my pistols in my belt, so as to be ready for immediate use, and turned towards the spot where the tiger appeared to be, at

the same time calling to Chineah and Googooloo, to prevent them leaving their post on any account, for I well knew how dangerous a wounded tiger is at any time, more especially in the dark, when he can see and man cannot. On receiving the contents of my rifle, he must have sprung clear over the ambuscade, for I heard him struggling in the bush just behind it, grinding his teeth and emitting strange moaning noises. Every now and then he seemed to be moving restlessly about, and at times I thought, from his hard breathing (which somewhat resembled a loud snore), that he was close to me; indeed I fancied once or twice that I felt the bushes shake, as if he was trying to get at me. Although prepared for all emergencies I remained perfectly quiet, listening intently to his movements, for the darkness was so profound that I could not see my hand before me. Chineah gave a signal to me once or twice, but I dared not answer it lest I should attract the enraged animal's notice towards the place of my concealment. After a lengthened period of anxious and exciting suspense, I heard the wounded tiger heave a long, deep-drawn sigh, which was followed by a succession of smothered groans and gaspings for breath; then came a heavy fall, another violent struggle, a gurgling, bubbling sound in the throat as of suffocation, a hollow rattle, and all was still.

I knew my antagonist was dead, but to make sure I waited a few minutes before leaving my ambuscade, when, hearing nothing, I lighted a bull's-eye lantern I

always carried about with me, which fastened by a spring to the front of my belt, and rifle in hand I took a cursory view of the bullock, the hinder part of which was half-eaten, and then examined the bush, where I found the tiger stretched lifeless on the ground, in some low cover about fifteen paces behind the place where I had been lying in wait. I called down Chineah and Googooloo, who lighted a torch, and we found that both of my shots had taken effect; the first struck him in the centre of the forehead, ploughed up the skin, and glanced off the bone; the second entered the chest and apparently traversed the lungs, for the ground about was covered with blood and froth that had issued from the mouth. He proved to be magnificently marked, although not so large as I expected, from the imprints of his paws.

We now lighted a large fire, wrapped ourselves carefully up in our blankets, and indulged in a brew of hot punch and the "fragrant weed," which never appeared more grateful than on that bitterly cold morning. After some time, the summits of the opposite hills began to appear more distinctly against a clearer sky, and presently the moon slowly emerged above the horizon, and her silver rays lighted up the whole scene. After having cut off the centre claw of the tiger's right foot, by way of marking the game, we collected the carpets, blankets, &c., and leaving Googooloo on the platform to watch the body, Chineah and I shouldered our rifles and made the best of our

way to the bungalow, where we arrived just as the first faint streaks of grey in the east proclaimed that day was about to break. After having given orders to the "Gooroo" to go with some of the people and bring the skin, I turned in and enjoyed several hours' refreshing sleep, tiffin being on the table before I made my appearance, when I was warmly congratulated on my success by several friends who dropped in to admire the spoils. B—— gave a very good account of the ibex on the Koondahs, having seen two herds on the summit of an isolated ridge overlooking the low country, which he forebore to follow on account of the weather threatening fog in those altitudes. We determined, however, to make an attempt, and ordered the people to be ready to start with a tent before daybreak the next morning, we intending to follow soon after.

The following morning B—— and I mounted our nags soon after breakfast, and sallied forth from the glen of the Mala-mund, equipped in suits of drab moleskin, which colour is the best adapted for ibex-stalking, as at a short distance it is scarcely distinguishable from the bleak crags among which they dwell.

The pursuit of the ibex, although an intensely exciting sport, is the most difficult of all deer-stalking, and proves the severest test of the qualifications of a hunter; for not only are these animals exceedingly shy and watchful, but they are also gifted with remarkably keen sight, and their senses of smelling

and hearing are developed to an extraordinary degree. From the almost inaccessible nature of the ground on which they are found, he who would take their spoils should be endued with great strength, perseverance, and endurance, besides which he must have the agility of a mountaineer and a steady head, or he can never follow up his game to their haunts along narrow ledges of scarped rocks and beetling heights, where a false step or a moment's giddiness would entail certain destruction. There can be no doubt but that intense excitement takes away all dread of danger, for I have seen it exemplified many times, not only on the hunting-ground but also on the field of battle. The same spirit which animates a "dare devil" in the front rank of the hunting-field at home accompanies him in the van of the fight abroad, and in both cases, if his career is not stopped by "a fall," he will be found "well in at the death." An ardent hunter, like a daring soldier, possesses a mental energy superior to all thought of peril; for, seeking only the attainment of his purpose, he pursues his course with that dogged stubbornness, inflexibility of purpose, and recklessness of self-preservation that make him invincible, and ensure success in the end. In my opinion, the greatest compliment the British army ever received was when the great Napoleon said that "*the men never knew when they were beaten.*" The saying marked the discrimination of the man, as it was that feeling that gained us Waterloo, Inkermann, and numberless

other glorious days; for our soldiers, in the words of our greatest bard,--

“ Could for itself woo the approaching fight,
And turn what some deem danger to delight.”

But, gentle reader, I crave your pardon for digressing, having wandered from my subject by musing upon bygone days and the many hard-fought fields that I have seen won. So now to describe the Neilgherry ibex, which is, I believe, of a species peculiar to the range, differing in many respects from those found on the Himalayas or the Caucasus. In shape they somewhat resemble the common Indian goat, but the body is much shorter in comparison with the height. The largest I ever saw, which was killed by B—— on the precipitous heights of the Koondahs, overlooking the low country—measured 6 feet 8 inches in length from the point of the nose to the end of the tail, 50 inches in height at the shoulder, and weighed, I should think, over 200 pounds, as it was in first-rate condition, the rutting season not having commenced. The horns are dark olive with black points, about 10 inches in length, ringed, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference at the base, gradually diverging until the points become nearly 6 inches apart. These ibex are uniformly of a light ash, deepening to dark brown on the hind-quarters and forepart of the legs, with an almost black stripe running along the ridge of the back. The head is fawn-colour, part of the face being of a rich brown, and the muzzle nearly black. The back is furnished

with a shaggy, stiff, upright mane, running along the neck and shoulders, which gradually grows shorter on the hind-quarters. The smell of this animal is particularly rank and offensive, and the flesh is scarcely eatable at any time, being so strong-tasted and coarse. Ibex are found in troops, rarely exceeding a dozen in number, amongst the rugged crags of the highest and most inaccessible mountains, their food consisting chiefly of the different mosses and short, crisp, delicate herbage indigenous to great altitudes. A wary old buck who has often quite a patriarchal appearance, is generally chosen as the leader of the herd; and if he sees anything suspicious, or catches a taint in the air, a peculiar whistle alarms the rest, causing them to collect together and remain on the alert, and on a repetition of the signal away they scamper, always ascending or descending a slope in an oblique direction. Sometimes I have seen an old female lead the herd, and on such occasions I have always found it extremely difficult to get within range, as they are doubly cunning.

Six hours' ride over most picturesque-looking country brought us to our encampment, which Chineah had chosen close to a small mountain-stream that took its source in a cavern on the side of a lofty peak, which stood out in bold relief, and towered high above the rest. Its rugged summit, round which wreaths of white, fleecy-looking clouds were floating in a deep blue azure sky, had the reputation of being the most likely ground to meet with ibex,

as from its extreme inaccessibility it had rarely been trodden by man, and the game had been but little disturbed. Having taken a cursory survey of the mountain, in order to endeavour to form some judgment as to the best side to commence the ascent on the morrow, we adjourned to the tent, where we found a dinner waiting to which we did ample justice; and, after making a few preparations, turned in soon after sunset, so as to have a good night's rest previous to the morrow's fag, which we well knew would prove a trying one.

Rising at dawn we found the cold severe and piercing; and, on looking out of the tent-door, we saw that the whole range of hills was enveloped in mist, a dense white cloud entirely obscuring the summit of the peak we intended to explore. This was not encouraging, to say the least of it: but towards sunrise the vapours began to open and disunite, and in the course of an hour portions of clouds separated themselves from the main body and moved slowly and majestically down the mountain, some remaining stationary on its side, whilst others hung suspended over the neighbouring densely-wooded ravines and valleys. Seeing that there was every prospect of a fine day, we set out, having each selected our favourite rifles, Chineah only being entrusted with a spare gun, whilst Googooloo, Naga, and Hassan, carried long ropes and short spears, which were to serve us in the ascent as "Alpenstocks." For some short distance the route was not

very difficult, but it soon changed its character and became full of obstructions ; for we had often to crawl along the smooth slabs of rocks on our hands and knees, and sometimes were obliged to take off our sambur-skin shoes (which were made purposely with very light soles) in order to get a better footing. The scenery was extremely wild, and a solemn silence reigned around, which was only broken at times by the deep grunt of some one of the gang when he came to a scarped rock or gully more difficult than the rest. On slopes here and there the mountain's vegetation was spangled with dew-drops, which sparkled like diamonds in the reflected rays of the morning sun.

After a severe fag we rested on a ledge of rock to take breath, and, being from constant exercise in rather better training than the rest, I pushed on a short distance in order to reconnoitre the ground, which seemed to be getting more and more difficult as we ascended. Whilst so engaged I heard a slight rustle, followed by a sound like the rolling of a pebble, and to my surprise saw a fine buck-sambur rise from his lair, just below the boulder of rock against which I was leaning, and gaze majestically round with erected head. I noiselessly took up my rifle, and, as he was leisurely trotting along the side of the mountain, brought the sight to bear just behind his massive shoulder and fired. When the smoke cleared away I saw him stretched lifeless on the ground, shot through the heart. The report soon

brought up the gang, and, having little time to lose, we merely hoisted our quarry—which proved to be a full stag with fine branching antlers—on to a huge boulder of rock, where, having fastened a pocket-handkerchief to one of the tines of his horns to scare away the vultures, we left him until our return. After several hours' clambering over broken ground, scarped rocks, and deep gullies, without seeing any indication of animal life, except a few butterflies, Naga called our attention to something moving along the scarped edge of a high ridge of cliff which frowned like a wall high above our heads, and with the aid of my field-glass I discerned a fine buck-ibex, evidently the sentinel of a herd, poised on a pinnacle of rock nearly half a mile distant. As his head was turned towards us, and he seemed to be watching our movements, I took it for granted that our presence was discovered, so I told Googooloo, Naga, and Hassan to remain quiet where they were, whilst B——, Chineah, and myself, made a detour so as to circumvent him.

After intense labour we clambered up the face of the cliff, having frequently to crawl along ledges of rock, overhanging precipices down which we dared not look, and with a good deal of manœuvring managed to get above our wary quarry, who was still apparently intently observing the movement of our party below, whilst seven others, confident in his watchfulness, were carelessly browsing on the short crisp herbage close by. By dodging from crag

to crag, after some intensely exciting stalking, we crept behind an isolated boulder of rock about a hundred and twenty paces to leeward of the herd, who were still grazing unconscious of danger; and, as the nature of the ground was such that we could not hope to steal any nearer without great fear of discovery, we prepared for immediate offensive action. Having taken the precaution of putting fresh caps on our rifles, B—— aimed at a fine buck that was carelessly receiving the caresses of a couple of does, whilst I took the sentinel, and firing almost simultaneously both fell to our shots. I wounded a doe with my second barrel, but it got away with a broken leg; B——, however, was more fortunate, for he stopped a second doe with a ball through the spine, and killed a young buck with the second gun, as it was bounding along a ledge of rocks at least four hundred paces distant. “Well done, indeed, Ned!” I exclaimed, rather taken aback with this splendid display of marksmanship; “that was a shot I envy you for having made, as I have rarely seen a bounding deer bagged at such a distance, notwithstanding I have hunted with the crack sportsman of the day. It would have gladdened old Walter’s heart to see one of his pupils do such credit to his ‘bringing up.’”

“Yes, Hal, it was indeed a long shot, and I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw him drop; but the credit of it, if any there be, must be given to old Purday, the maker of your rifle; for never do I think

that grooved bore threw lead so true, and I now do not wonder at your luck in bringing down the hatties (elephants) right and left. It's the gun, man; it's the gun! Look after the game, whilst I pace the distance for my own satisfaction."

This was done, and it proved to be five hundred and forty-six paces, or, allowing for inequalities in the ground, about four hundred yards. Whilst Chineah was despatching with his knife the still struggling doe that B—— had wounded, and B—— had gone to gather up his game, I went to look after the sentinel, which, to my surprise, was nowhere to be found, although I saw him drop the moment I fired, apparently lifeless. Whilst looking about, I crept on my hands and knees towards the edge of the precipice, and, lying my full length, looked over, when, to my astonishment, I saw the carcass on a narrow ledge of rock jutting out of the scarped cleft about thirty feet from the top. With the aid of my glass I could see that it was a fine specimen with splendid horns, which I determined *coûte qui coûte* should not be lost. I scrambled carefully back, and explained the case to B——, who advised me to give it up as "lost game," it not being worth while risking life for the sake of a pair of horns; but I did not like to return empty-handed, and my determination was soon taken, for I despatched Chineah for the rest of the gang. As soon as they arrived, I took the strong silken ropes they carried, on which I made a few knots, so as to enable me to get a better hold,

and prevent myself from slipping, then fastening one end securely round the base of an immense boulder of rock, I threw the other down the abyss, taking the precaution of placing my coat and the turban-cloths of some of the people over the rough edge of the cliff, so as to prevent chafing. All being prepared, in spite of the remonstrance of my people, who feared some accident from the snapping of a rope, which I knew would sustain a ton in addition to my weight, I commenced the descent, even B—— turning away, as the thought made him feel giddy. To me it was easy work enough, although I must own that I felt rather nervous as I first swung myself off, and hung suspended over a precipice, six hundred feet in depth, by a cord not three-quarters of an inch in diameter, which, not being steadied at the bottom, kept turning round and round, now and then knocking me against projections in the face of the rock. However, my “suspense” was of very short duration, for I soon found firm footing upon the ledge of rock where the dead ibex lay, which luckily turned out to be much wider than I had at first imagined from its appearance from the top. I soon fastened the rope round the buck’s head, and on giving the preconcerted signal of a whistle, he was hauled up by the gang, who again threw down the cord for me. I climbed up the rope easily enough, but had great difficulty in scrambling over the crest, as my eyes were nearly filled with sand, which fell from the sides. At last I managed it, and, after having broken up the game,

and despatched two of the gang for the head and skin of the sambur, we commenced our homeward route. It was a glorious evening. The last rays of declining day lingering upon the surrounding amphitheatre of hills lighted up every crag with a distinctness that seemed to bring close objects which in reality were far distant, whilst the western skies glowed with the brightest gold and purple tints. The scenery, though of a wild and rugged description, was most beautiful,—

“ Woods crowding upon woods, hills over hills,
A surging scene.”

CHAPTER XVI.

“Of objects all inanimate I made
 Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,
 And rocks, whereby they grew, a paradise,
 Where I did lay me down within the shade
 Of waving trees, and dream'd uncounted hours,
 Though I was chid for wandering ; and the wise
 Shook their white aged heads o'er me, and said
 Of such materials wretched men were made.”

THE LAMENT OF TASSO.

THE KOONDAHS.

The Bowani river.—The Koondahs.—The charms of forest life.—The hunter's studies and recreations.—The instinct and character of animals.—A clever dog.—The language of animals.—The “voices of the forest.”—Strange natural phenomena.—Evening in the forest.—The return to camp.—The Gooroo's news of game.—A fight between a full-grown tiger and a bull bison.—The game ended.—The field, the vanquished, and the victor.—Salt earth.—Excursion to the Ungindah peak, and a good day among the ibex.

OUR camp was most picturesquely situated on a green knoll by the Bowani river, there only an insignificant mountain torrent, which rising near the Kudiakad peak (the loftiest of the Koondah range, the summit being nearly 8502 feet above the level of the sea) flows through a deep fissure in the rocks, and then dashes through the bottom of a thickly-wooded glen, overhung in places by wild precipitous crags, from the rugged sides of which numerous foaming cataracts and babbling rills burst forth from giddy heights,

spreading a silver mist over the hanging woods. Gushing from the heart of the mountain, the Bowani dashes along, through scenes of ever-varying loveliness and beauty, with a voice of impetuous freedom and gladness; now with a pleasant murmur it rattles over a bed of pebbles; now, lost to the eye, it glides stealthily through a shady hollow; now it sweeps past the base of huge masses of syenite cliff; now, divided by dark, boldly jutting rocks, it is scattered into a score of bubbling rills; now, again united in one broad expanse, a rolling mass of foam, it goes tumbling headlong over a rocky precipice into a boiling abyss below, mingling all its waters in a foaming pool. Joined by a thousand springs and tributary crystal streams, it dashes down the steep mountain side to the basking plains below, and glides smoothly along, pursuing an easterly course through the forest, extending round the base of the Neilgherries, a broad and rapid river, hushed in peace, reflecting the passing cloud, and scarcely ruffled by the freshening breeze.

The Koondah range forms an immense circular basin, rising on every side like a wall, the outline of the summit being broken into most fantastic forms and shapes. The western side towards the low country is almost everywhere perpendicular, consisting of precipices and overhanging cliffs, down which a stone might drop five thousand feet before striking the bottom. Those celebrated hunting-grounds, the Nedimullah Hills, are a densely-wooded

range, commencing at the N. W. angle of the Koondahs, passing Neddiwutteem, and terminating abruptly at the Goodaloor Pass.

The 'sholahs,' or woods which cover the crests of the lower hills rising from the table-land of the Koondahs are most beautiful, being destitute of underwood, and their limits so well defined, that they much resemble the ornamental plantations of an English park; indeed, so much does this similitude strike the Anglo-Saxon stranger the first time it meets his eye, that he looks around the verdant lawns, shrubberies of evergreen, stately avenues, and embowering groves, fully expecting to see some ancestral manorial mansion, or grey embattled pile, to diversify the landscape, so strongly does it remind him of the home he has left,—perhaps for ever.

The woods are carpeted with mosses and lichens of endless variety of tints, whilst in glades of vernal freshness are scattered violets, primroses, buttercups, thyme, wild anemone, and several species of the orchis tribe. Wild fruits are also abundant, particularly the Brazil cherry, raspberry, strawberry, blackberry, cranberry, and hill gooseberry, besides which I have often noticed the "chumpanee," or camphor-tree, and the "darchenee," or bastard cinnamon. On every side are clumps of crimson rhododendron, white camellia, and here and there beautiful natural bowers, formed by different creeping plants, more especially the woodbine, dog-rose, jessamine, and fuschia, all of which are indigenous to this lovely climate.

As I have said before, it is not the mere killing which affords the hunter pleasure, as he ranges the forest in the pursuit of game, for the ever-changing sylvan realm is beautiful under every aspect. The varied hues and forms of the different trees, each possessing its own distinctive character, are so beautifully blended by nature as to set at naught all the imitations of art. Here a crowd of interesting objects may be embraced at a glance, on every side forming vignettes such as Turner loved to delineate. Yes, my gentle reader, the forest has indescribable charms which grow round the heart, but he must live long with nature who would understand her mysterious signs, hidden ways, and ever-changing face, or interpret the wild voices of the woods—a language which none save the long-initiated can read.

The hunter, after a long sojourn in these solitudes, gets accustomed to observe the minutest change; nothing escapes his keen observation, and by degrees, with close attention, he begins to trace the cause by the effect, and to study the regular, harmonious, and systematic laws of nature. Then he never suffers from lassitude, gets disheartened, or is cast down when alone in the forest, for he has within himself an inexhaustible source of occupation which keeps his mind active, his thoughts engaged, and his faculties in constant exercise. To him every object has its attraction and importance, either elucidating some principle or affording instruction; and the more he learns the more his curiosity is stimulated rather

than wearied, until after a time he becomes almost independent of external circumstances, and loses all craving after the artificial excitement of the outer world. He finds "that there is society where none intrudes," or, as the great master-mind Shakespeare says :

"Tongues in trees—books in the running brooks—
Sermons in stones—and good in everything."

Besides the beauties of nature that meet the hunter at every step, the observation of the instincts, character, and habits of different animals is one of the most entertaining occupations. In the place of improvable reason given to man, all animals are endowed with faculties which impel them to perform certain actions and guide them in certain operations which cannot be ascribed to their own mental consciousness, for some of their works show an acquaintance with scientific principles which man has only discovered by long reflection. By watching closely the inhabitants of the forest, the hunter will be struck with the different sagacious expedients by which they provide themselves with food, construct their habitations, or defend themselves against their natural enemies ; and he will find that the capabilities of all animals are proportionate to their wants ; thus some have different senses more strongly developed than others. Sometimes the different ingenious means and artifices animals resort to, will almost induce the observer to suspect that they are endowed with a certain amount of reason ; yet, on reflection, he must be convinced

that this cannot be, as the ant and the bee, which are of a very inferior class in the scale of animals, possess an instinct more highly developed than any other. The various means animals will resort to for self-preservation are very extraordinary : one class will endeavour to crush their antagonist with their ponderous bodies ; a second charge, making use of their horns ; a third employ their paws and teeth, being gifted with immense muscular strength ; a fourth being protected by their hides, roll themselves up in a ball ; a fifth inject subtle poison from hollow fangs ; a sixth sting ; a seventh eject from their bodies a volatile foetid liquor offensive in the highest degree, or exhale disagreeable and penetrating odours ; an eighth outstrip their pursuers by superior swiftness, fly, climb out of the way, or creep into the earth ; a ninth counterfeit death on the presence of danger ; whilst others, again, have such extraordinary vitality that dislocated portions grow and become new animals. The characters of different animals vary extremely : some are naturally of a savage and vindictive disposition ; for instance, the tiger's thirst for blood is insatiable, whereas the lion does not attack his prey except from the cravings of hunger ; some are constitutionally brave, as the boar, buffalo, and bear ; whilst others, such as the hyena and most of the feline class, are cowardly. Some are pugnacious, as the rhinoceros, jungle cock, and spider ; and others harmless by nature, and peacefully inclined, as the elephant and deer, except when excited by

jealousy. Some are naturally solitary, only seeking each other during "the season of love," which comprises all the rapacious order of beasts or birds ; others live in families, as the elephant, or in herds, as bison, deer, and antelope. Some associate only for the purposes of hunting, as wolves, jackals, wild dogs, and vultures ; or previous to migrating, as swallows, snipe, and woodcock ; whilst others live permanently together, as monkeys, parrots, rabbits, crows, pigeons, prairie dogs, and the society bird.*

In some animals memory and attachment to mankind are more strongly implanted by Nature than in others, more particularly in the dog, horse, and elephant. I once lost a dog (a cross breed between a fox-hound and a Bringarry greyhound), far away in the Wynaud forest, not far from Manantoddy, when the weather was so hot that no scent would lie. After a long search—for he was a great favourite, being a souvenir from an old friend—I gave him up as lost, or carried away by a panther, of which I had seen the track during the day ; but to my astonishment, a few days afterwards I received a note from a chum with whom I had been staying at Coimbatore, stating that he had been awakened in the middle of the night by a scratching at his door, and on opening

* In Central Africa I have come across the habitations of the society birds, which at first sight I imagined to have been constructed by man ; for they live in hundreds together in a kind of mud and thatch house, impervious to wet, having long streets with lines of nests on each side at regular distances from each other. The tree selected is generally the smooth-barked acacia.

it, in rushed 'Ponto,' tired, footsore, and looking very disconsolate when he could not find his master." He must have traversed seventy miles of dense forest, in which there were no roads, and swum several rivers, without any guide but instinct.

The hunter may gain fresh insight into the nature and character of animals by their cries under different circumstances which express their various desires and emotions, as all have certain calls and utter peculiar sounds denoting pleasure, sorrow, maternal affection, connubial attachment, anger, rage, alarm, and fear. In former days there were men who professed to understand the songs of birds; and often as I have listened to the merry songsters of the wood, or to the exquisitely plaintive melody of the turtle-dove as he wooed his bride, I have thought that it was quite possible to learn much of their language by watching their actions, and paying attention to the manifold accents of their notes—now low, soft, and long drawn out, now shrill, disjointed, and harsh. These studies of Nature are the hunter's recreations, and he feels pleasure proportionate as he understands them. Her laws are ever the same, ever changeless, ever perfect. Truth is ever before him, and there are no imperfections in the models of his study—for Nature is ever young.

Yet there are mysterious natural phenomena met with in the dense forest, for which even the long-initiated hunter cannot account. I allude to those indescribable but peculiarly soothing and melodious

sounds that issue from every side, and seem to make the very stillness palpable. My Mentor, Walter M——, who, besides being the keenest sportsman was also the most skilled in woodcraft, and all knowledge appertaining to the forest that India ever produced, used to term these nameless sounds "the breathings of Nature;" and often when watching for game in places far away from the haunts of man, have we listened, hour after hour, endeavouring to account for each of the various noises as they caught the ear. The faint, soothing tones and humming sounds with which the forest is resonant at certain times is doubtlessly occasioned by the countless variety of insects that inhabit it; but sometimes when alone, even in broad daylight, the hunter will find strange emotions arise, and feel startled for the moment at the almost supernatural tone of the voices of the wild woods, for the unknown is always fearful until habit has familiarised us with its presence; and when alone in those solitudes man is deprived of that false courage that is engendered by the presence of his fellow man. Sometimes the hunter will hear resounding through these wilds, strange sounds like bursts of fiendish laughter, or long, protracted moanings, as if some human being was suffering in extreme agony; and by instinct he will cock his rifle and peer through the subdued light, and quickly flitting shadows, fully expecting to meet more than an earthly antagonist; but after a moment's reflection, he will lay down his trusty weapon with a smile at his own excitability,

knowing that the strange sounds he has heard either proceeded from some prowling hyena, or were caused by the wind sweeping through the giant trees and rocky gorges. Again, sometimes, when on trail, he will fancy that he hears "floating sounds," like passing wings, and a hum like murmuring of voices in the air, and will stop and listen intently, fearing to move lest he should break the spell, when in reality it was only the creaking of boughs, bamboos rubbing against each other, or the foliage overhead being stirred by a gentle breeze. Many a time in the still night as he lays down to rest after the fatigues of the day under some mighty patriarch of the forest, he will hear the wind sighing his lullaby among the distant hills, slow, sad, and melancholy. I remember in 1855, when crossing a lofty range of mountains in Circassia, that I was very much surprised, and my people frightened, at hearing low musical breathings like the tones of an Æolian harp, evidently issuing from the side of the mountain. My followers called it "devil's music," and said that it prognosticated evil; but I believe that it was caused by strong currents of air passing swiftly over the numerous caverns and crevasses, although Humboldt attributes this natural phenomenon, which he also experienced, to parts of the ground being unequally heated."

"*Mais revenons à nos moutons.*" The short twilight of the tropics had darkened into night ere we arrived at our bivouac, but the moon rising above the brow of the mountain shed a flood of silver light over the

scene, making our tents glisten snow-white against the dark background of hill and wood. Hundreds of flying foxes were gliding silently through the night air like evil spirits of darkness, and the harsh cry of alarm of the plover, "*Did he do it, did he do it!*" was heard long after the rest of the feathered race were at rest. Then the voices of night came upon our ear—the tapping of the woodpecker; the low chuckling of the night-hawk; the hooting of the horned owl; the wailing yell of the jackal; the whooping of the great rock monkey; whilst sundry smothered roars and hoarse grumblings at no great distance, told us that the fiercest denizens of the forest had risen from their lairs, and were patrolling in search of prey.

As we drew up, "Five Minutes" was to be seen bustling about impatiently in front of the tent; "a sure sign," B—— said, "that a good dinner was spoiling for the want of being eaten;" so, after we had looked to the comfort of our people and cattle, performed our ablutions, and donned our ordinary in-door "*deshabille*" shirts, kinkob padjamas, and slippers, we sat down, and never was good cheer, and the prospect of rest, more appreciated, for we had had a hard day's fag.

After the "inner man" was satisfied, and "the beverage of the faithful, that cheers but inebriates not," served, B—— lighted a cigar, and was leaning back in his chair, with his legs on the table and his eyes half-closed, watching the smoke escape from the corners of his mouth, the picture of a happy man,

whilst I was inspecting the "shooting-irons" which Chineah had just cleaned, preparatory to loading for the night, when the Gooroo came in trembling with excitement, saying, "Sahib, sahib, koolgha boht nuz-deek hy." (Sir, sir, there are bison close at hand). We immediately donned our boots, shooting-coats, caps, &c., hastily loaded our rifles, and were preparing to start, when Chineah and Googooloo, who had gone out to reconnoitre, returned, saying that there was a great fight going on amongst the bison a little way down the stream, and whilst they spoke, a loud, bellowing noise was heard, followed by an unmistakable roar, which caused no little commotion amongst the horses and bullocks that were picketed round our tents.

"A tiger, by the powers!" exclaimed B——. "We shall have to look out for squalls."

"Indeed we shall," replied I; "so let all the people be on the look-out, as some of the cattle may break away from fright, although I hardly fear any actual danger, as the white tents will scare off any intruder."

Having arranged for the safety of our camp, B—— and I, armed with rifles and pistols, followed closely by Chineah and Googooloo, each carrying a couple of spare guns, sallied forth, and keeping along the bank of the river for some short distance, entered a dense cover, from which the sounds of the contest seemed to issue, by a narrow deer-run. Here we could only get along very slowly, having to separate the tangled

brushwood with one hand, and hold the rifle, cocked and ready, with the other. Having proceeded in this manner for some distance, guided by the noise of the contest, which sounded nearer and nearer, we came to an opening in the woods, where we saw a huge bull bison, evidently much excited, for his eyes flashed fire, his tail was straight on end, and he was tearing up the ground with his fore-feet, all the time grunting furiously. As we were luckily well to leeward, the taint in the air was not likely to be winded, so I made signs to Chineah and Googooloo to lay down their guns, and climb into an adjacent tree, whilst B—— and I, with a rifle in each hand, by dint of creeping on hands and knees, gained a small clump of bush on a raised bank, not more than thirty yards distant, from whence we could observe all that was going on. When we first arrived the tiger was nowhere to be seen, but from the bison's cautious movements I knew he could not be far off. The moon was high in the heavens, making the night clear as day; so not a movement could escape us, although we were well concealed from view.

Several rounds had already been fought, for the game had been going on a good twenty minutes before we came up; and the bison, besides being covered with white lather about the flanks, bore several severe marks of the tiger's claws on the face and shoulders. Whilst we were ensconcing ourselves comfortably behind the cover, with our rifles in readiness for self-defence only—for we had no intention of

interfering in the fair stand-up fight which had evidently been taking place—a low, savage growling, about fifteen paces to our right, attracted our attention, and, couched behind a tuft of fern, we discerned the shape of an immense tiger watching the movements of the bison, who, with his head kept constantly turned towards the danger, was alternately cropping the grass, and giving vent to his excited feelings every now and then by a deep, tremendous roaring, which seemed to awaken all the echoes of the surrounding woods. The tiger, whose glaring eyes were fixed upon his antagonist, now and again shifted his quarters a few paces either to the right or the left, once coming so near our ambushade that I could almost have touched him with the muzzle of my rifle; but the wary old bull never lost sight of him for a second, but ever followed his movements, with his head lowered to receive his attack. At last the tiger, which all along had been whining and growling most impatiently, stole gently forward, his belly crouching along the ground, every hair standing on end, his flanks heaving, his back arched, and his tail whisking about and lashing his sides; but before he could gather himself together for a spring which might have proved fatal, the bison, with a shriek of desperation, charged at full speed, with his head lowered and the horns pointed upward, but overshot the mark, as his agile antagonist adroitly shifted his ground just in time to avoid a vicious stroke from his massive horns, and, making a half-circle, sprang a second time,

with the intention of alighting on his broad neck and shoulders; this the bull evaded by a dexterous twist, and before his adversary could recover himself, he again rushed at him, caught him behind the shoulder with his horns, and flung him at some distance, following up to repeat the game, but the tiger slunk away to gather breath.

Round after round of the same description followed, allowing breathing time between each, the tiger generally getting the worst of it, for the bull sometimes received his rush on his massive forehead and horns, and flung him a considerable distance, bruised and breathless, although the skin seemed too tough for the points to penetrate; once, however, I thought the bison's chance was all over, for the tiger, by a lucky spring, managed to fasten on his brawny shoulder, and I could hear the crunching sound as his teeth met again and again in the flesh, whilst the claws tore the flank like an iron rake. With a maddening scream of mingled rage and pain, the bull flung himself heavily on the ground, nearly crushing his more nimble adversary to death with his ponderous weight; and the tiger, breathless and reeling with exhaustion, endeavoured to slink away, with his tail between his legs; but no respite was given; his relentless foe pursued with roars of vengeance, again rolled him over before he could regain his legs to make another spring. The tiger, now fairly conquered, endeavoured to beat a retreat; but this the bison would not allow; he rushed at him furiously

over and over again, and at last, getting him against a bank of earth, pounded him with his forehead and horns until he lay motionless, when he sprang with his whole weight upon him, striking him with the fore-feet, and displaying an agility I thought incompatible with his unwieldy appearance.

The game, which had lasted over a couple of hours, was now over, for the tiger, whom we thought perhaps might only be stunned, gave unmistakable signs of approaching dissolution. He lay gasping, his mouth half open, exposing his rough tongue and massive yellow teeth; his green eyes were fixed, convulsive struggles drew up his limbs, a quiver passed over his body, and all was still. His conqueror was standing over him, with heaving flanks, and crimsoned foam flying from his widely-distended nostrils; but his rolling eye was becoming dim, for the life-blood was fast ebbing from a ghastly wound in his neck, and he reeled about like a drunken man, still, however, fronting his dead antagonist, and keeping his horns lowered, as if to charge. From time to time he bellowed with rage, but his voice became fainter, and at last subsided into a deep, hollow moan; then his mighty strength began to fail him, and he could not keep his legs, which seemed to bend slowly, causing him to plunge forward. Again he made a desperate effort to recover himself, staggered a few paces, and, with a surly growl of defiance, fell never to rise again, for after a few convulsive heavings, his body became motionless, and we knew that all was over.

“Well,” exclaimed B——, as we shouldered our rifles and advanced towards the dead combatants, “I have seen many a determined mill between the human species, but never a fight on so large a scale. Was it not gallantly contested, Hal?”

“It was, indeed,” I replied; but I wish that this sturdy old patriarch had survived the combat, as he might have proved the sire of a valiant race; but it was scarcely possible, as his throat is almost torn to pieces.”

Chineah and Googooloo now joined us, and on further examination we found the throat of the bison so lacerated that the windpipe was exposed, and several large arteries cut, an ear bitten off, and the flesh on the shoulder actually torn away in strips. The tiger, on the other hand, had one eye gouged out, several ribs broken, and the lower part of the belly ripped open, from which wound the intestines were protruding. I ordered Chineah and Googooloo to collect some dry wood, and light a large fire to keep the jackals and hyenas away, which being done, we returned to our camp, and were soon in the arms of Morpheus.

Refreshed and invigorated by sound repose, the next morning at daylight we revisited the battle-ground, where we found the gang already busily engaged in despoiling the combatants. The tiger had been so mauled and mangled by his furious adversary that the skin, although beautifully marked, was hardly worth taking, great patches of hair having been

rubbed off on all parts. He was a splendid fellow, and had he been able to have got a fair blow with his immensely muscular fore-paw on the bison's neck, in the first instance, it would have told with fatal effect. The ground, besides bearing numerous traces of the recent combat, was so torn up that it appeared to have been ploughed in patches, and I found it to be strongly impregnated with salt; consequently I was not at all surprised to find numberless slots of sambur and spotted deer, as well as the fresh traces of a herd of bison, well knowing the partiality of these animals for that article, which they seem to be able to smell from extraordinary distances.

Breakfast over, we went to the Ungindah peak after ibex, and this day the tables were turned, for I had the good fortune to kill five to B——'s three, making a total of eight head, which was considered a first-rate bag for the hills. During the next four or five days we hunted in this part, and managed to pick up six more ibex, besides two bison killed by B—— one evening close to the salt-lick, after which we returned to Ooty.

CHAPTER XVII.

“Coming events cast their shadows before.”

THE SAD END OF A FAMOUS SHEKARRY.

An Indian spread.—Lieut. W——.—The dead charger.—News of elephant.—Arrangements and start.—A voyage in a strange craft.—Alligators.—The Mooyaar jungle.—The Muntjak.—The silent approach of deer.—The Loris.—Native superstition.—The route.—A Mulcher village.—News of a rogue elephant.—The rencontre.—An awkward position.—The rogue's cunning.—The charge.—Life and death on the shot.—An unlooked-for coincidence.—The bivouac.—Evident traces of a comrade's handiwork.—The elephant his own doctor.—The bivouac.—The bullets recognised.—No fresh spoor to be found.—Return to camp.—Pot-hunting.—A blank hunt for spoor.—W——'s non-appearance.—Return to the hills.—Sad news.—The Mulcher's prophecy fulfilled.—Lieut. W——'s shocking death from an enraged wounded elephant.

FEASTING and revelry were at their height in the shekarry's den (Burnside Cottage, above the Malamund), and never was there a merrier set of fellows than those assembled that evening to “wet” the promotion of K——, an old chum of H.M.'s 84th Regiment, who happened to be staying with me at the time. “Five Minutes,” my *chef de cuisine*, who was celebrated even on the Hills for his attainments in the gastronomic art, on this occasion had done more than sustain his reputation. The standing Anglo-Indian dishes, a fatted turkey stuffed with cachew nuts, Yorkshire ham, and saddle of gram-fed

mutton, were flanked by boars' chops, snipe-trail pie, jugged hare, and venison pasty, followed by curried trout, cabobbed ortolans, woodcocks on toast, bison's marrow-bones, and grey teal, all of which delicacies had been contributed by some of the sturdy sportsmen then gathered round the table.

There is a kind of freemasonry amongst military and naval men that does not exist in any other class of society, and this "mystic tie" is most undoubtedly strengthened when they also happen to be sportsmen. Among the guests was a young lieutenant belonging to a Native Infantry Regiment, of the name of W——n, deservedly accounted one of the best shots in the country. Above common height, his limbs were moulded in most exquisite symmetry, developing an extraordinary play of muscle matured by constant exercise. A profusion of curls black as raven's wing shaded a forehead bearing the stamp of remarkable intelligence, and the characteristic expression of his dark handsome face was innate good-humour. Open as the day, and full of the milk of human kindness, he was one of those happy beings only met with now and then whose lives seem all sunshine. The cheerful tones of his voice and inspiriting flash of his bright sparkling eye enlivened and animated the whole company. Never had he been more brilliant than on this occasion; and after the cloth was removed, the healths of her Majesty and the newly-promoted one drunk, cheroots lighted, and a brew made, he gave us the late Tom Morris's well-known chant:

THE BOAR.

“ The boar, the mighty boar's my theme,
 Whate'er the wise may say—
 My morning thought, my midnight dream,
 My hope throughout the day ;
 Youth's daring spirit, manhood's fire,
 Firm hand and eagle eye,
 Must they acquire, who dare aspire
 To see the wild boar die !

CHORUS.

Then pledge the boar, the mighty boar,
 Fill high the cup for me,
 Here's luck to all, who fear no fall,
 And the next grey boar we see.

“ We envy not the rich their wealth,
 Nor kings their crowned career ;
 The saddle is our throne of health,
 Our sceptre is the spear.
 We rival, too, the warrior's pride,
 Deep stained with crimson gore ;
 For our field of fame's the jungle side,
 And our foe the jungle boar.

Chorus—Then pledge the boar, &c.

“ When age hath weakened manhood's powers,
 And every nerve unbraced,
 These scenes of joy will still be ours
 On memory's tablet traced ;
 And with the friends whom death has spared
 When youth's wild course is run,
 We'll tell of the dangers we have shared,
 And the tushes that we have won.

Chorus—Then pledge the boar, &c.”

We all joined in until “ the whole welkin ” rang
 with our chorus, and hardly had the reverberated
 echoes died away in the glen than I was called upon,
 and gave

THE DEAD CHARGER.

“ Farewell my good steed ! thy long service is o'er ;
 'Thou wilt bear me in war and in pastime no more :

No more thou’lt be cheer’d by the sound of my voice ;
 No more in thy speed shall my spirit rejoice !
 Stiff, stiff are those limbs, which in life used to fly
 Like a storm-driven rack through the hurricane sky,
 And cold is that ardour, so generous and true,
 Which age could not weaken nor labour subdue.

“ In the pride of thy strength thou hast borne me along,
 And hast shared in the risk of the battle’s hot throng,
 Where the arrows have whirled and the bullets have showered,
 But thine eye never quailed, and thine ear never cowered.
 Thou hast seen the fierce Khalsa’s sharp murder-stained spear ;
 Thou hast heard the ‘ hurrah ’ of our headlong career,
 And hast witnessed, when on them our vengeance was wreaked,
 How the desperate have striven, and the timid have shrieked.

“ We have gone through strange scenes, my lost steed, I and thou,
 And thy valour hath saved me from peril ere now ;
 I have shared with thee oft my scant morsel of bread,
 And lain by thy side on the same chilly bed ;
 (’Twas the fortune of war). And in mischievous whim
 I’ve had cause to exult in thy fleetness of limb ;
 For thou’st borne me right well thro’ morass and thro’ wood,
 And gallantly breasted both upland and flood.

“ No spur ever galled thee, my noble old horse :
 I used thee not so as to now feel remorse ;
 In thy wildest career, or to guide thee, or check,
 A word from my lip, or my hand to thy neck,
 Was of magical power ; and, for pleasure or need,
 A touch of thy bridle could urge thee to speed ;
 The loud-booming gun could not quiver thy nerve,
 Nor the wounded grey boar ever force thee to swerve.

“ No more shall the trumpet’s shrill tone of command
 Make thy hoof spurn the earth and thy nostrils expand ;
 No more to thy curvets my sabre shall clank,
 No more make thee bound as it swings to thy flank ;
 Nor again shall that eye with proud rapture be lit
 ’Midst the toss of thy head and the champ of thy bit.
 So mild, yet so mettled ; so steady, yet free :
 Oh, never will steed be what thou wert to me !”

Other songs followed, tale after tale of past prowess
 and wild adventure was related, with prophecies of

the future, anecdote and jest followed each other in startling rapidity, and the grey streaks of dawn were visible in the east before the company separated.

I had hardly turned in more than a couple of hours when Chineah awoke me with the intelligence that a Curumber had come in the cantonment to say that a large herd of elephants had been seen the day previously near a nullah that flowed into the Mooyaar river, about three miles from the foot of the Hills. W——, who had also heard the news, came to my bungalow, and it was arranged that he should go down the Seegur, or northern ghaut, and work towards the eastward, whilst I went down that of Coonoor and made for Guzelhulli, at which place we were to meet on the third day—capital head-quarters for hunting, it being close to a narrow belt of jungle between the Hills and Mooyaar river, through which elephants had to pass, whether *en route* for the Bally-rungum hills, or the southern forests.

Having completed my preparations, I sent on the guns, &c., Chineah, Googooloo, the Gooroo, and a horse-keeper, also two coolies laden with prog, and after they had started four or five hours I mounted my nag Gooty and caught them up at the bottom of the ghaut just as the sun was setting. We passed the night at the Metrapolliam bungalow, after having ordered the head man of the village to send to Sere-mogay and have a boat prepared for us against the morrow, as I proposed going down the Bowani as far as the confluence of the Mooyaar.

At dawn the next morning we embarked in our strange craft, which was nothing more than a round saucer-shaped basket about fourteen feet in diameter and thirty inches in depth, made of bamboo, and covered with raw bullock hides sewn together. At the bottom we strewed branches and bundles of straw, so as to prevent the horses' hoofs from breaking through, and, all being prepared, our boatman pushed off. No rowing was required, as we were driven down the stream by the force of the current at the rate of about five miles an hour, the boatman keeping in deep water by means of a broad paddle, which not only acted as a rudder, but prevented the boat from turning round and round, as it would have done if left to itself. There is no possibility of upsetting these primitive craft, and the only accident that can arrive is, that the leather may be torn by sharp ledges of rocks or trees half-buried in the bed of the river, which is of rare occurrence, as, although they carry an immense weight (from three to four tons), they rarely draw more than from four to six inches water. Besides, this accident is easily remedied, as the boatman always carries the necessary materials for repairing damages; the boat is drawn ashore, and a leather patch makes it as water-tight as ever.

In about two hours we came to the village of Danayankottei, where we breakfasted, whilst Chineah and the Gooroo went to glean intelligence from a Mulcher tribe, who lived in the jungle not far off.

The party returned with five of the men, two of whom had been with me on a previous hunting expedition, but they brought no news of elephants; however, I bade them accompany us, their services as trackers being always useful in the jungle, and we continued our voyage. As we were gliding down the stream, which in many parts was fringed by dense jungle, the howling of my dogs repeatedly attracted my attention to the numerous alligators that were swimming with only just their noses above water, on the look-out for prey; and I had some very pretty rifle practice, turning several of them over with a conical ball between the eyes, when they would show their dark yellow throats, lash the water with their tails for a moment, and sink to the bottom.

By ten, p.m., we arrived at the junction of the two rivers, where we disembarked, striking into the belt of thick jungle that lies between the Mooyaar and the north side of the hills, just below Rungasawmy's peak, which, being over seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, is a conspicuous landmark. Here we fell in with another party of Mulchers, whom we induced to accompany us for a bribe of some tobacco, and forming a kind of irregular line, we proceeded to hunt for tracks. We came across several old spoor of elephant, numerous fresh slots of deer and pig, and the pugs of a tiger that had passed by early in the morning, which I could tell by most unmistakable signs, but I saw no trail to lead me to suppose that any ele-

phants had been lately in that part of the forest. I therefore dismissed all the Mulchers except the two who had been with me before, who knew the country well, and struck the Mooyaar again, continuing my course up stream by a deer-run, every now and then making a cast in the jungle for the chance of falling in with a trail. As we were going quietly along, our footsteps hardly making a sound on the green sward, I saw at about eighty yards distance, in a little opening of the trees, two jungle sheep picking up some fallen moura* berries, but at the same moment, before I could throw up my rifle, the dogs Hassan and Ali, that were being led in a slip by the Gooroo, also perceived them, and whimpered. Alarmed by the noise, they were bounding off through the bush, when by a snap shot I rolled over the buck with a broken shoulder, and he was immediately secured by the dogs. As I found him to be a good specimen, I had his skin carefully taken off, whilst the flesh was divided so as to be more easily carried. Jungle sheep, or, more properly speaking, the muntjak (*Cervus moschatus*) are of a reddish-brown colour, rather darker on the back and face, and lighter under the belly and the inside of the legs. Their great peculiarity is a curious bony substance, about three inches long, covered with skin, growing out of the skull, to which the horns are attached. These latter are about six inches in length, with one tine near the root, and the point rather bent

* A jungle tree bearing a dark purple fruit, somewhat resembling a sloe, which is much sought after by bears, deer, and hogs.

forward. They are generally found in pairs, and their flesh, which is very dark in colour, is excellent eating, being delicate, fine grained, and partaking something of the flavour of the hare.

Towards noon we came upon a small river that rises in the hills and winds through the celebrated Orange Valley, from whence it descends the steep mountain sides in a series of cascades, and gliding through almost impenetrable forest, finally falls into the Mooyaar. Here I made a halt, sending the gang up the stream to look out for tracks, and whilst they were away I sat down to rest in the fork of a tree, the foliage of which completely sheltered me from the piercing rays of the sun. A quarter of an hour might have passed, during which time I remained perfectly quiet, having fallen into a brown study as to the best means of proceeding, when all at once a kind of low snort attracted my notice. I caught up my rifle, silently cocked it, and peered carefully round, listening attentively, but nothing was to be seen. Not a twig cracked, nor a leaf rustled; still, I could distinctly hear a hard breathing, evidently close at hand. At last, while keeping my eye upon a large clump of bush, from which I thought the sound proceeded, I saw the long brown hairy face and expressive black eyes of a deer issue forth close to the ground from under the foliage. For a moment the head remained perfectly motionless, although I observed the nostrils expand and the eyes reconnoitre the glade in a most suspicious manner; however, the height of my posi-

tion above the ground not only enabled me to escape notice, but also prevented the *taint* in the air from being discovered, for I again heard a significant low grunt, evidently denoting satisfaction, and almost immediately a noble buck axis stole stealthily forward, so noiselessly that I did not hear a stir in the foliage. He stood for a moment drawing in the air, scratching his back with his wide-spreading antlers, which had still the velvety skin upon them, and then gave a sharp bark, evidently a signal to the rest of the herd, for they immediately came trotting up, and all entered the opposite thicket. I could easily have rolled over the buck and a couple of does, as my spare guns were hanging within my reach by their slings on a fork of the tree; but I did not care to do so, as, having the jungle sheep, my people did not want for venison, and it had now become my practice never to kill more game than was absolutely required for food.

Chineah and the rest of the people came back without having fallen upon any fresh spoor of elephant, although one of their number managed to catch a young loris* alive, and brought it back clinging to his hair, to the great disgust of the two Mulchers, who declared that it was the most unfortunate animal that could be met with in the jungle, as it always portended death or misfortune at hand. Chineah and the gang laughed heartily at their superstition, but as

* A rather scarce animal of the sloth species, having a face like a fox, and about the size of a young grey tufted monkey.

subsequent events turned out, they often recalled to mind the Mulchers' saying, and a loris was ever afterwards an object of extreme dread to them. We now pushed forward rapidly, and soon came to our proposed rendezvous, the village of Gujelhulli, where I bought half a dozen sheep, a basket of fowls, and a bullock-load of rice for food, at the same time engaging a party of Mulchers who knew the country to accompany us. We then held a consultation as to what was best to be done, and it was arranged that we should immediately continue our journey to Mayanduroa, a little Mulcher village said to be four coss distant, which was to be made our temporary headquarters, as the most likely ground was in that neighbourhood.

Accordingly, as soon as we had partaken of some refreshment, which the curnam, or head man of the village, was polite enough to offer us, we again set out *en route*, and after a tramp of three hours by a jungle path, reached our destination. The village consisted of only seven bamboo and grass huts; but no sooner did the inhabitants understand that I was going to remain in that neighbourhood, than they all, men, women, and children, turned out to cut bamboos and gather dry leaves and long grass for the construction of a hut under Chineah's directions.

Whilst these preparations for passing the night were being made, two men of the Mulcher village who had just returned with a load of roots which they had gathered for food in the jungle, came up with the

intelligence that they had been chased by a *rogue* elephant that afternoon near a shallow tank about a coss distance. Although somewhat fatigued with my long walk, as it yet wanted a couple of hours to sunset, I determined to go after him, and leaving Chineah in charge of the camp, accompanied by Googooloo and the Gooroo carrying spare guns, I set out under the guidance of the two Mulchers. Their coss proved a very long two miles, for I found myself close to the foot of the hills before they pointed me out a fresh spoor, evidently that of a solitary elephant of no great dimensions. After tracking it up for a short distance, I came to a jheel, or marsh full of high reeds and stunted bush, and there, in the centre of a shallow pool, I saw the object of my search, evidently enjoying the luxury of a bath. At first sight I thought it was a large female, as no tusks were perceivable, but on a closer inspection with my field glass, I found it to be a bull, although of that caste called by the natives *hyjera*, or barren males. The Mulchers told me that he was a very vicious brute, as not only had he repeatedly charged them without provocation, but when he found they had eluded his pursuit by climbing up a large tree and hiding themselves amongst the foliage, he wreaked his fury on a bamboo which he plucked up and trampled to pieces under his feet, screaming with rage the whole time. Such being the case, I did not care to have more people about me than was absolutely necessary, so giving the two spare guns to Googooloo, I had the rest climb into high

trees, from whence they could see the sport without danger.

This matter arranged, I tried the wind by a feather, which, when after elephants, I generally kept pinned by a bit of fine silk to my hunting-cap, but as circumstances turned out, this precaution was hardly required. I now put fresh caps upon my guns, taking care to see that the powder was well up in the nipple, reconnoitred the ground carefully, and made a half circuit of the marsh, in order to get behind the cover of a patch of high reeds which appeared about seventy yards distant from the spot where the elephant was standing. We both kept well under cover, making as little noise as possible, and approached *up wind*; but the keen-scented animal, although he had his back turned towards us, perceived the taint in the air when we were three hundred yards distant, and with a hoarse scream of rage came rushing, tail on end, in our direction, flourishing his trunk about and sniffing the wind. Luckily, the loud splashing of his great feet betrayed his movements, for we were knee-deep in mud, and the reeds in some places were considerably higher than our heads. This was an awkward position to be in; moreover, the setting sun shone right in my face, and I was much afraid that it would dazzle my eyes and prevent me from taking proper aim. I pushed on until I came to a place where the reeds were only up to my waist, when I halted, looked to see that my guns were dry, and then told Googooloo to get on my shoulders to look round over the

reeds for the enemy. Scarcely had he mounted than I knew he was discovered, by the hoarse, appalling scream of rage that rang through the air, sounding as if close at hand ; and barely had he time to reach the ground and catch hold of the spare guns, than the infuriated monster burst through a patch of high reeds in our rear that had hitherto concealed him from our sight and charged splashing up towards us. When I first caught a glimpse of him he was certainly not more than five-and-thirty paces distant, and I immediately raised my trusty rifle ; but life and death were on the shot, and it did not belch forth its deadly contents until he had charged to within fifteen paces, when I let him have it, aiming full at the centre of the hollow just over the trunk. The ragged bullet flew true to the mark, burying itself in the brain ; but the impetus of his headlong charge carried him on, and with a mighty splash that might have been heard at a quarter of a mile distance, he fell, with his outstretched trunk close to my feet, covering us over with mud from head to foot. I felt sure that my aim was fatal, but had it not been so, we should have been in a pretty predicament, for we were both completely blinded for the moment, and if he had not been very severely hit, he might have caught us, one after the other, before we could have cleared the mud away from our eyes. Poor Googooloo got much the worst of it, being also nearly choked ; but after some spluttering and coughing, he wiped his eyes on the tail of my shooting coat, and we simul-

taneously burst out into a loud laugh at each other's queer appearance.

This elephant was evidently a most dangerous rogue, for he had not only tracked us up entirely by his extraordinarily keen scent (in following the taint in the air) but he also showed such desperate cunning in *doubling* before he made his attack, so as to take us in the rear and cut off our retreat. Luckily, however, for us, clever as he might have been in the doctoring line, he could not recover himself after the settling effects of a single pill administered by the arm of *the most worthy* Bishop (of Bond Street).

Having washed off some of the extraneous mud in a neighbouring pool, I went to examine the dead elephant whose almost rabid state I could now easily account for, as besides the hole my bullet had made, from which the blood was still oozing, there were three other recent wounds in nearly the same place, with a fourth that had passed through the off ear, and two more in the off shoulder. What astonished me more particularly was, that none of the three wounds which the animal had previously received should have proved mortal, although all were planted in the most vital part of the elephant's skull, and one within an inch of my own shot, from which death was instantaneous.

On my attempting to probe the previous wounds with a ramrod, in order to ascertain the direction the bullets had taken, I was much surprised to find them plugged up with red clay, which operation, I have

no doubt, was performed by the sagacious animal himself in order to stop the hæmorrhage. However, as night was drawing on, and I had a good hour's walk through the jungle to my camp, I deferred all further examination until the morrow; and having looked to my arms, in case they might be required *en route*, cut off the elephant's tail and the tips of his ears to send to the collector's cutcherry for the government reward,* and joined the Gooroo and Mulchers, who, hearing the shot, were approaching us. We then made the best of our way to the village, which we reached safely after nearly missing our way once or twice from the darkness of the night. I was regularly tired out when I arrived, but a bath, clean clothes, and good dinner soon set me up all right again. Before I turned in for the night I smoked a cheroot, lying upon a carpet spread upon some dry leaves before a huge log fire in front of the hut round which my gang and all the village, men, women, and children were assembled. Chineah distributed tobacco to all, and concocted a brew of arrack-punch, that met with universal approbation, after which the trophies were handed round, whilst one of the Mulchers, with much gesticulation and humour, gave

* The East Indian Government used to give a reward of seventy rupees for each male elephant killed, and fifty for each female, on account of the damage they committed in sugar-plantations and rice-fields; and, as a proof of their death, the tail, tips of the ears, and tusks, were required to be sent to the cutcherry or collector's office; but the intrinsic value of a fine pair of bull elephant's tusks being much greater than the reward, the seventy rupees is often not claimed; therefore the amount of head-money paid by Government can afford no estimate as to the number of elephants killed.

an account of the affair, as he had witnessed it from the top of the tree, which recital produced an extraordinary effect upon his listeners, for when he came to the part when we were discovered by the elephant, he imitated very correctly the different noises made by that animal; and as they sat on their heels cuddling their knees, they began to roll their eyes, grunt, and shake about, every now and then breaking out into strange noises and cries, as if the scene was actually before them; however, the relation produced a satisfactory effect, for it was arranged that all the men of the tribe should go out on the morrow to look for fresh trails and earn the rewards of waistcloths, Madras cotton handkerchiefs, and tobacco, which Chineah promised on my part in case of success.

On the morrow at daylight I sallied out, accompanied by the gang and a large party of Mulchers, taking my course towards the jheel where I had killed the elephant the day before. Here I found that a pig had been paying a visit to the remains, for a bit of the hind-quarters had been eaten away, and there were no fresh traces of animal life except the broad slots of a large boar, besides which I could plainly see the rips made by his sharp tusks in the flesh. The gang then set to work with their axes to cut out the tusks, which, although considerably thicker, much resembled those of a female, being only about sixteen inches in length, and hardly protruding from the lip. They were, however, perfectly solid,* the cavity at

* Their weight was just under eight pounds.

the end being only an inch in depth, and much heavier than ordinary ivory. I then cleared out the mud, and with an iron ramrod probed the wounds in the forehead, when I found that, although they had all struck the vital spot, not one had been delivered at the proper angle so as to penetrate the brain, although they were, I imagined, sufficient to have caused the animal to die a lingering death.

As the ground about the jheel seemed a very likely-looking haunt for elephants, I and Googooloo took a stroll round, looking out for spoor, but not a fresh one was to be seen, except that of the rogue killed the day before, although there were signs of almost every other denizen of the jungle having drunk lately at the pool. Whilst we were away, some of the gang who were curiously inclined, with their axes extracted the bullets from the forehead of the dead rogue, and presented them to me on my return, when, to my surprise, I recognised two cylindro-conical projectiles made of a mixture of lead and pewter, as belonging to W——'s two-grooved double rifle. The third was a round brass bullet that exactly fitted my Westley Richards two-ounce smooth bore, of which W—— had a sister gun.

"Ha, ha, sahib!" said Chineah, with a chuckle of satisfaction, for he was extremely jealous of my reputation as a shot; "master wipe dat gentleman's eye dis time. Him shekarry men now nebber can talkee verra too big, same like when take buck sambur at Pykarra." (This was said referring to an

incident which happened some weeks before, whilst out sambur shooting at Pykarra, near the Goodaloor ghaut, when, after W—— and I had each fired a shot at a buck elk, it was found dead, having only been struck with one bullet, which could not be found as it had passed through the body, and on a question arising between our people, I gave up my claim to the head and skin, much to Chineah's disgust).

“Yes,” I replied, “there can be no mistake this time as to who killed the elephant, but you must remember that it was not from bad shooting that Mr. W—— did not secure the tail.”

Chineah said nothing, but shook his head as he walked away, for he did not at all like to entertain the notion that W—— was a better shot than his master, which was really the case, as he was well known to be one of the best marksmen in India at a target, although as yet he had not killed any great quantity of game.

As I felt rather stiff from over-exertion, and several of the gang were foot-sore, I determined to have a day's rest before commencing operations with W——, so bidding the Gooroo to take the Mulchers and hunt for spoor right across the belt of jungle between the hills and the Mooyaar, which the herd must have gone through if they had yet passed *en route* to Hassanoor and the Ballyrungam jungles, I and the rest of my people returned to camp, where I lay down during the heat of the day. Towards evening

I strolled out with my rifle, and coming across the fresh slots of spotted deer, I followed them up, and after a little careful stalking, came up with the herd, and managed to kill a couple of does for venison, which was rather a windfall, as I had many mouths to feed. At sunset, the Gooroo's party returned, but they had seen no fresh spoor, so I determined to return on the morrow to Gijelhulli, and await the arrival of W——.

The next morning, after having distributed some rupees, and what remained of our stock of rice, &c., to the Mulchers, we set out, following the course of the river, until we arrived at the village of Gijelhulli, where I halted for four days, when, finding that W—— did not make his appearance, and feeling convinced by repeated search that there were no elephants in that part of the jungle, I retraced my steps homeward, making a two days' march to Metripolliam, where I fell in with C——, a young "sub." who was coming up to the hills on division leave from Trichinopoly.

It was a lovely evening when we rode into Ootacamund, accompanied by all my people, and although I had only been absent so short a time, I felt quite glad to be back again. To me the vernal hills never appeared so refreshing and strikingly beautiful as when returning from the reeking plains below; and although long years have passed since that day, I can now mentally behold the scene, for on every side, as far as the eye could reach, the harmonious combina-

tion of hill and wood, of rugged steep and ferny glen, presented a picture with that depth of colouring and those exquisitely rich tints that Salvator Rosa would have been delighted to transfer to canvas. As we passed by the church I saw two coolies standing by a newly-made grave, upon which they had evidently been working, and with a strange presentiment that I can hardly explain, I rode up to the enclosure and asked "Kown murgia?" ("Who is dead?")

"W——, sahib," replied one of the workmen. "Hathee uskoo mardala dus rose hoa." ("An elephant killed him ten days ago.")

A cold chill came over me upon hearing this sad intelligence, and numberless scenes in which my late friend had borne a conspicuous part flashed in a moment before me, but I felt considerable satisfaction in thinking that I had settled scores with his murderer, for I was convinced that he must have been killed by the rogue I had fallen in with. C—— and the gang came up at that moment, and long and loud were the lamentations, for there were few among them who had not at one time or another experienced some kindness or received some present from the generous and open-handed sportsman who was gone.

Chineah, who had always been a great favourite of his, was quite overcome for the moment, and when he had sufficiently mastered his emotion to speak, exclaimed, "Nusseeb by! Mulcher log such bola." ("It is fate! the Mulcher people spoke truly;") referring

to their prophetic omen on falling in with the loris, which, strangely enough, happened at the very time of the accident.

The coolies could give no further particulars, so I continued my route homewards, where everything seemed to remind me of him whose sun had set whilst it was yet day. I sent Chineah to fetch some of the people who were with him at the time, and from them I learned that they had fallen in with fresh spoor soon after descending the ghaut, and early in the day came across a solitary elephant, apparently without tusks, who was standing fanning himself in a patch of open tree jungle, knee-deep in undergrowth. W——, in the first instance, tried to approach him to leeward, but finding that he could not get a shot, the animal's back being turned towards him, crept round from tree to tree until he got a fair view of his forehead, when he let drive right and left with his double rifle, and dropped him. However, the elephant, who was only momentarily stunned, began to recover his knees, when W——, snatching his second gun from his shekarry (a double two-ounce smooth bore), again brought him to the ground with a third shot, and fancying he was dead, rushed forward, but the animal with a scream of rage regained his feet, and perceiving his antagonist, charged upon him tail on end, with his trunk thrown high up in the air. At this moment, either W—— lost his presence of mind and fired without any aim, or finding that the mortal place in the centre of the forehead was hidden by the upraised

trunk, must have endeavoured to bring him down by a side shot, but his fourth bullet (most likely the one that passed through the ear) produced no effect, and in the twinkling of an eye, before he could get out of the way, the infuriated animal was upon him, twisted his trunk round his legs, and hurled him to the ground. W——, although much injured, and doubtlessly with some of his limbs broken, still moved, and at this moment one of the shekarries who carried a loaded gun fired two shots into the animal's side; but nothing attracted his attention from his victim, whose piercing shrieks rang through the forest, for regardless of the shouts and cries of the natives, he again seized him, placed his huge foot upon his chest, and trampled and knelt upon him until almost every bone was broken, when he flung the mangled and lifeless body on one side, and rushed trumpeting through the forest. Such was the melancholy fate of one of the best shots that India ever produced; and I must have fallen in with his vindictive adversary about eight hours after the fatal rencontre, for I am convinced, from the circumstantial evidence of the recognised bullets, that the rogue I slew was the guilty party, although each of the next half dozen elephants that were killed round about the hills was supposed to have had something to do with the transaction.



A CLOSE SHAVE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Now, ye familiar spirits, that are cull’d
Out of the powerful regions under earth,
Help me this once.”

HENRY IV.

THE ANAMALAI MOUNTAINS.—ELEPHANT HUNTING.

Coimbatore.—News of elephants.—A Poojah to propitiate the Hindoo deities meets with no satisfactory results.—A court-martial held on the recusant Sawmy.—Sentence and execution.—The ghost of the injured Sawmy appears to the Gooroo.—His threat.—The laying of the spirit.—Result obtained.—The start.—M——’s hut at Tunnacuddoo.—His hospitality.—A bison wounded.—Taketty.—News of a herd of elephants.—Our bivouac.—A night alarm.—Elephants astir.—A bull-elephant yields up his spoils.—An immense snake caught.—We follow up the spoor of the herd.—Beautiful forest scenery.—Tracking by torchlight.—Difficulties surmounted.—We swim a nullah.—The trail.—The herd in view.—A bull-elephant anchored.—A second tusker wounded.—A charge.—A predicament.—A lucky shot decides the day.—The result of a pat from an elephant.

COIMBATORE has ever been considered one of the most desirable of our military cantonments in Southern India, not only on account of its proximity to the Neilgherry and Anamalai Mountains, and its comparatively cool and salubrious climate, but because it is a single station, where one regiment only is quartered, consequently the duty is extremely light, and “*leave*” easily attainable. The town itself stands about 1400 feet above the level of the sea, in dry, well-cultivated country; is neatly built, and consists

of twelve wide and well-ventilated streets. Tippoo Sultan, the Rajah of Mysore, occasionally resided in the old palace, the ruins of which are still standing, and built a handsome mosque.

The officers' quarters are substantially built, and delightfully situated outside the native town, by a lake three miles in length, which in the season is covered with waterfowl of every description, and in the reeds and paddy-fields adjoining, snipe are to be found in thousands. To the lover of large game this station offers peculiar advantages, as the virgin forest jungle surrounding the Neilgherry and Anamalai ranges are celebrated as being the haunts of all kinds of large game, besides containing abundance of teak (*Sectona grandis*), blackwood (*Dalbergia satifolia*), boxwood, sandal-wood (*Santalum album*), and other valuable timber, which is, however, unfortunately, too remote from water-carriage to permit of easy exportation.

The end of December (when the north-east monsoon rains are over, and the sun has gained his most southern declination) may be considered the coldest season of the year in all those countries north of the equator, for at this period the range of the thermometer in the shade is from sixty-two to eighty degrees, and the climate is there delightful, the north-east wind proving enlivening and bracing, and at this time the jungle is considered free from fever, the greatest danger to which the Indian sportsman is exposed.

I had left my eyrie, "Burnside Cottage," near

Ooty, having received information that a herd of elephants were said to have been seen near one of the collector's spice-gardens in the Bolanputty Valley, and was staying with M——, who was in the regiment then quartered at Coimbatore, whilst my gang went out to gather intelligence. After an absence of five days they returned, their search having proved a blank, no fresh trails having been discovered.

As was my general custom before the departure of my gang on an expedition, I had distributed some few rupees to purchase sheep, fowls, &c., for sacrificial offerings to their "Sawmies," so as to propitiate the deities, and bring good luck on the enterprise, and on this occasion it appears that the non-success of the reconnaissance had excited the indignation of the whole gang against a certain stone image of Haniman (the monkey-god) in the neighbourhood of the lake, as sheep had been sacrificed, cocks immolated, cocoanuts broken, and incense burnt before him, and yet the search for game had proved a failure.

I was enjoying a weed after dinner, with M—— and B——, when loud, discordant vociferations were heard in the servants' outhouses, and going out to see what was the matter, we found the whole gang holding a court-martial on the recusant Sawmy; to which we listened, keeping out of sight. The Gooroo was gesticulating in an extraordinary manner, and holding out somewhat in this style:—"Soono bhai (listen, brothers), here we are all very tired, with our feet broken, and our legs and arms full of thorns with

tramping for five days through the jungle, and all to no purpose, for the elephants, may their fathers be burnt, were not to be found, and we had to come back 'with blackened faces' before the gentleman and 'eat dirt' (literally, get abused). Is not this vile conduct on the part of that monkey-faced Sawmy, to whom we went to the expense of offering sacrifices of sheep and cocks? Are we to suffer him to laugh at us in our trouble and throw dirt on our beards in this manner? No, brothers, we will pay him out. Heigh! Ali Beg, you are a Mussulman, and do not fear the evil eye of a Hindoo sawmy, so take the cursed son of burnt fathers and defiled mothers who has dared to bring all this evil upon us, cast dirt upon our beards, and make the master turn his face away from us, break off his nose and ears, put out his eyes so that he can never find his way back, and fling him into the lake." The whole gang highly approved of this sentence, and amidst the hootings, groans, and expletive execrations of the party, the image was dug up from the spot where it had, perhaps, rested for centuries, and after having been mutilated by Ali Beg, and subjected to the vilest abuse and ridicule, was thrown in the lake; none of the Hindoos, however, venturing to lay a finger upon it.

We slipped quietly away without any of the gang discovering our presence, and after turning over the affair in my mind, knowing the character of my people, I resolved to work upon their superstitious fears to my own advantage; and some few days afterwards, whilst

out deer-stalking, I watched an opportunity, when the Gooroo was separated from the rest of the gang, and approached tolerably near unperceived, hid myself under a large mass of parasitical plants, and called out in a disguised low sepulchral voice, "Oh, Perriatumbie, Perriatumbie!" (his real name, "the Gooroo" being a cognomen given to him by the gang, on account of his having some pretensions to priestcraft and sorcery) "am I not the god Haniman, whom you and your wretched associates caused to be defiled and thrown to the bottom of the tank? I am not dead, as you will find, although I have been eight days in the water; I can see you, although Ali Beg tried to put out my eyes; I can hear, although my ears are disfigured; I can smell your vile carcass, although the end of my nose is off; and I can hardly keep my hands away from your throat, although they are maimed." At the first sound of my voice the Gooroo tried to make a bolt, but in his mad terror he stumbled over the root of a tree, falling heavily his whole length on the ground, when he began writhing about in a convulsive manner, as if wrestling with some imaginary enemy, groaning and keeping his face covered with a cloth. Taking advantage of his terror, I continued in the same tone of voice, "Oh, Perriatumbie! are you not ashamed of having so ill-used your good Sawmy Haniman? Did you not tie seven tails of male elephants shot by your master as a *lignum* (the sacred thread worn round the body only by the Brahmins) round the image of that pert god,

Gánesea? Oh, Perriatumbie! my evil eye will always be upon you, and the rest of those who ill-treated me, to work you evil, until I have also a lignum of elephant tails on me, and my wounds are anointed with the fat and blood of many tigers. I want no sacrifices of sheep and cocks, for the price of them comes out of the pocket of your master, on whom be blessings and good luck, for he never did me any harm, and must not suffer for your ill-doings. Go and show him the fresh trails of elephants and tigers, that he may kill them, and bring me their spoils as offerings, that I may not destroy you all, as your crimes deserve." I then stole quietly away and joined the rest of the gang, but in the course of half an hour I saw the spell had begun to work, for the people collected in groups, and whispered mysteriously to each other; and every now and then the names of Haniman and the Gooroo caught my ears, which proved that a great sensation had been caused by this *supernatural* visitation, which I increased to an awfully exciting pitch by telling them that as I was passing an aspen-leaved peepul (a sacred tree among the Hindoos) I heard a sweet voice, like that of a young girl, exclaim, "Why, oh! master, do you hunt in these jungles when the elephants, bound by fate, are waiting for you on the Anamalai Mountains, where you can now follow them well, as there is no fever?" And that although I looked everywhere to find whence the voice proceeded, I saw no one except an old, queer-looking black monkey, which hobbled away out of my sight in a

moment. I told this tale with the greatest gravity and command of countenance, and the effect was prodigious—the whole gang instantaneously exclaiming, shaking their heads, and nodding significantly at each other, that the voice had only spoken truth, and that we had better immediately prepare for an expedition to that part of the country. This was all I wanted; for although at this season of the year the jungle is said to be free from fever, such was the dread of the deadly effect of the malaria of those trackless and unknown forests, that up to this I could never bribe or induce any gang to undertake any very lengthened expedition in those parts, notwithstanding it was known that elephants swarmed, and large game of all kinds was abundant. Having, therefore, attained my object by working up their credulity and superstitious fears, “I struck whilst the iron was hot,” and having consulted with B——, who proposed to accompany me, the morrow was destined for preparation, and the day after for departure.

During the night I heard the shrill notes of the cholera horn and other discordant Hindoo music, and my head servant, Yacoob Khan, a Mussulman, informed me that the gang had that evening fed twenty Brahmins, and that they were then performing Poojah (religious ceremonies) in honour of the god Haniman. The next morning, on my way to the racket-court, as I passed by the lake, I saw the image of the god in its original position, decked out with wreaths of jessamine, and other fragrant flowers, and gaudily

painted with yellow ochre and tinsel. Some of the gang must have had a cool dip during the night, for the water was deep where the idol was thrown in.

We were very busy all the next day in getting supplies, casting hardened bullets, and arranging our baggage, all of which was carried on ponies or coolies' shoulders, and in the evening, as soon as the moon rose, the traps started, escorted by the gang, for Anamalai, a considerable village about five miles from the ghaut or pass leading up the mountain. B—— and I rode on at daybreak, and passed the greater part of the day in hunting up villagers who knew something of the hills, in which search, through the agency of the Curnum, or head police authority, we were tolerably successful, as we secured the services of three men, whose employment was hunting in the deepest jungle for cardamoms. Under their guidance, we ascended the mountains by a steep pass, extremely difficult for our baggage-animals, and, after a hard day's fag, arrived at the hut of M——, the celebrated elephant shot, who had established his head-quarters on a little clearing he had made in the heart of the jungle close to the Tunnacooddoo waterfall.

He is the Government agent appointed to collect the revenue of this wild district, and also superintendent of the teak forests, no tree being allowed to be cut without the payment of a certain tax. The timber when felled is allowed to remain on the ground

a certain time to season, after which it is dragged by elephants, who are trained for the purpose, down slopes and slides of the mountain to the low-country, where it is collected, and floated down the Ponani River to the town of Ponani, on the coast, from whence it is embarked for Bombay, where much is exported for the purposes of ship-building. M—— received us with great hospitality, and gave me a map of his explorings in the surrounding forest. He also deputed six Carders (some people of a wild jungle tribe he has domesticated) to accompany us in our trip. We lighted a huge box-fire outside his hut, and had a good warm, for the night was very chilly; after which we dined, had a chat as to our future proceedings, and turned in.

The next morning we went out after bison, and soon finding a fresh trail, M—— wounded a bull, which was found dead some days after by the Carders. He recommended us to go to Taketty, and there build a hut as head-quarters, as it was a famous place for elephants, he having killed five tuskers near there at different times. As the jungle was impenetrable for our baggage-animals on the top of the mountains, a part of the gang had to go down into the low country, and ascend the mountains again by a different ghaut. They, however, managed to do this in one day, arriving at Taketty, which consists of three or four woodcutters' huts, just before sunset.

The next day the gang constructed two huts, one for ourselves and the other for our servants and the

ponies; which would have been taken away by tigers in the night had we left them picketed outside. M—— having some magisterial duty to perform in the low country, could not accompany us, so we bade him adieu, and, under the guidance of some of his Carder tribe, joined the gang, whom we found very comfortably established. The next day, sent down into the low country for six bullock-loads of rice and curry stuff, a dozen sheep, a couple of milch goats, and a gross of fowls, for whose reception we prepared places, after which we made a reconnaissance of the jungle round about our hut, near which several old elephant spoors were distinctly visible, and one of the woodcutters, who accompanied us, told us that some of his people had seen a herd a short distance from their huts at Cawderpuddy, where they were engaged in cutting timber two days previously.

I therefore arranged with B——, who was suffering from dysentery, and hardly fit for hard work, that I should start with Chineah, Googooloo, and two others of the gang, early on the morrow, to reconnoitre, leaving him, with the rest of the people, to get everything ship-shape in the huts. Accordingly, at day-break, we started, under the guidance of the woodcutter, and a couple of Carders carrying axes, provisions for three days, and large combleys, or goats'-hair blankets, to serve as coverings.

We soon arrived at Cawderpuddy, where we found about twenty men engaged in cutting timber. Here we learned that a herd of fifteen elephants, amongst

which were two tuskers, had been seen quietly browsing in a valley some three miles off, the morning previous, by some women, who had gone there to pick "barjee," a kind of wild spinach, and for the inducement of some tobacco one of the men offered to show us the spot. After a couple of hours' fag through thickish jungle, we came upon an open glade, at one end of which was a swamp, where a sounder of hog were wallowing, and here we found the trail of a large herd, not many hours old, which we followed until the sun began to get low in the horizon, when arriving at a watercourse, I gave the order to halt and prepare the supper, whilst I looked out for a suitable place to pass the night.

Being an old forest-ranger, and used to camping out, I was not very particular, my great object being to secure a flank defence, so as to avoid the possibility of being taken unawares by wild beasts; and a dry bed of sand, under a high shelving bank, from which projected two high boulders of rock, about ten feet apart, seemed to offer a natural fortress, as by making a huge fire in front we were unassailable from without. Chineah and Googooloo spread one of the comblies over two bamboos, so as to form a kind of awning to shelter us from the dew, whilst the Carders collected heaps of dry leaves for our beds, and a sufficient stock of logs to keep a large fire burning throughout the night. Our supper, consisting of curry and rice, was soon ready, and discussed; a cheroot followed,

after which the watch was set, arms carefully examined, and we turned in for the night, every one rolled up in a combley blanket.

I had slept for some hours, when suddenly I was awakened by Chineah laying his hand on my shoulder, with a significant low whistle, which signal with the gang denoted that "*something is stirring.*" I immediately sprang to my feet on the alert, and, after listening attentively for a moment, heard a loud crackling of bamboos, as if some large animals were forcing their way through the jungle, accompanied by a curious blowing noise, which at first I thought was the grunting of a bull-bison, but shortly afterwards I distinctly recognised the "trumpeting" of elephants, and the continual crashing of trees at no great distance left no doubt on my mind but that a herd was near at hand. I put fresh caps on my guns, for fear the old ones might have been injured with the dampness of the night-air, and taking Chineah (on whose pluck I knew I could fully depend) with me to carry my spare guns, I cautioned the rest to lie quiet until my return, and sallied forth to reconnoitre.

A full moon was nearly at its zenith, so that, except where the foliage was very dense, or under the deep shade of the mighty forest, we had no difficulty in discerning our way, guided by the strange noises and frequent crashing and rending of trees, which sounded at times almost as loud as the report of musketry, as these huge denizens of the forest

rushed through the thickets, snapping and tearing up everything before them.

As we were going along, I heard a rustling and a low hissing, and I felt rather startled by seeing a huge snake, which appeared to be of the boa species, coiled round a date-tree, close to which I had passed ; as, however, it did not appear to move, I left it undisturbed, and, after a tramp of about half an hour, arrived at a jheel or swamp, at one end of which was a large pool, where three elephants were amusing themselves by sucking up the water into their trunks and spouting it into the air or over their bodies. After a careful reconnoissance I made sure there was no tusker among them, so I left them unmolested, and crept gently round the shady edge of the cover, taking care to keep well to leeward, so as to prevent their getting wind. Passing the swamp, I entered a rather open bamboo-jungle, when, from the peculiar noises on all sides, I knew I was in the middle of a large herd.

I saw several groups of females browsing about, and threaded my way amongst them, with Chineah close at my side, keeping a sharp look-out for a tusker. We were several times very nearly discovered, although we kept in the shade as much as possible, and always strove to get to leeward. I had counted sixteen elephants without having distinguished any with tusks, when my attention was arrested by hearing a low grunt, and on turning a corner of dense thicket, I perceived a stately bull,

with a fine pair of "ivories," swinging himself to and fro, whilst a female was caressing his neck with her trunk.

I stole gently forward, closely followed by Chineah, and, after a little careful and exciting stalking, managed to conceal myself behind a clump of bamboos near which he was standing, which fortunately was to leeward. I remained without stirring for a few moments, the bull not giving me the chance of a fair shot, although I could have doubled up the female half a dozen times over, as I got a full view of her forehead within fifteen paces. At last he swerved round, fronting me, but his head turned towards the female, who just at this moment seemed to have caught scent of us, for she raised her trunk in a very inquisitive manner, and tore down one of the bamboos in front of us. No time was to be lost; I gave a shrill whistle, which caused the bull to extend his ears, and turn his head in my direction, presenting me with a full view of his forehead. Now was my time: I took a steady aim between the eyes, and gave him both barrels, right and left, at a second's interval. A hoarse scream followed the report, awakening the echoes of the forest, the huge beast staggered back a couple of paces, and reeled like a drunken man, then his sturdy legs gave way under him, and he sank to the ground in a kneeling position. I snatched a second gun from Chineah, and fearing he might only be stunned, stepped up to him, and sent a ball crashing into his eye, but it was

not required; he never stirred—he was dead. The female who was with him rushed frantically through the jungle, trumpeting, and the rest of the herd, taking alarm, dashed down a densely crowded valley at a pace which defied pursuit.

Chineah cut off the tail as a trophy, and after we had examined our prize, whose tusks appeared to weigh heavy, we rejoined the rest of the gang, who were anxiously awaiting our arrival, and once more rolling ourselves in our blankets were soon in the arms of Morpheus.

He who sleeps with a forest-tree for his canopy, a stone for his pillow, and the ground for his bed, is not likely to play the sluggard, and I was up and astir as soon as the soft blue light of morning became perceptible along the eastern horizon. A few hours of repose had had the desired effect—restoring both strength of body and vigour of mind—I awoke full of health, and fit for another day's hard fag.

After a hurried ablution in the nullah, I lighted a cheroot, and, guided by my own footprints, proceeded with the gang towards the scene of last night's operations. *En route*, I perceived the snake which had so startled me in the dark, still in the same place, coiled round the date-tree, evidently fast asleep, in a state of repletion. I saw at a glance that it was a beautifully marked "damian," or rock-snake (a kind of boa), which is not venomous, and I determined, if possible, to capture it alive, it appearing an excellent specimen. This was soon effected. Chineah fastened

a slip-knot to a stout bamboo, and, passing it over its head, pulled, whilst some of the rest of the gang struck the tail with sticks, until it unloosened its coil from the tree, and wound round the bamboo, to which it was tied with the stalks of creepers, It proved about eleven feet in length, and over a foot in circumference. A wicker-basket was soon constructed, and in a few days it became quite tame, not attempting to escape when handled.*

Our captive secured, we soon made our way to the spot where the dead elephant was lying, and whilst some of the gang worked by turns with the axe to cut out the tusks (a tedious and lengthy operation, requiring much care), and others prepared our morning repast, I strolled about with Googooloo, and examined the trail of the herd, in order to ascertain whether there were any other large tuskers in it worth following up.

Our search proved successful, for the troop was evidently much larger than I had at first imagined; and we found the spoor of a very large elephant, which, from the size, I concluded must be a bull with weighty ivories. From the trail, which I followed up for some distance, I perceived that the panic, occasioned by my shots, had not been general among the herd, for some of them could hardly have been alarmed, as they had broken off branches and browsed

* The author subsequently gave it to A. Bain, Esq., of Madras, who transferred it to the Zoological Gardens, where it is now, much increased in size.

on the young wood, within half a mile from the spot where I had killed one of their number. I therefore made up my mind to pursue, and returned to the gang, to hasten them in their work so as to be sooner on their heels. The tusks, which weighed about 70 lbs., were cut out, and, with the snake, given in charge of Mootoo, Verapah, and three of the Carder tribe, for conveyance to the hut, to which I intended to return, on the close of the present expedition.

After a couple of hours' tracking, we came to a purling mountain-stream, meandering through dense forest-jungle, where we filled our "mushucks" (large leathern bottles), in case of not meeting with water further on, and continued our course, the spoor leading along the bank.

As we advanced, the woods became more and more open, here and there alternating with beautiful green glades, which much reminded me of the park scenery of "merrie England." On every side were clusters of magnificent teak-trees, interspersed with peepul, jack, and acacia, their branches twined with wild vines, and covered with bunches of deliciously-sweet purple, or rather nearly black, grapes, many-coloured convolvuli, or other beautiful flowering parasites. It was a wild garden of Nature's own planting, and struck with the strange and almost supernatural beauty of the scene, I sat down to contemplate her handiwork. Every sense was gratified. The eye wandered with delight through numerous vistas amid the foliage, and on verdant glades, diversified with

parterres of orchids, in full bloom, of every hue and shade, whose presence filled the forest round with fragrant aroma, and loaded the breeze, which was delightfully cool as it played round our heated temples, with pleasant perfume. The bulbul (the Indian nightingale) vied with the other feathered songsters in melody, soft, clear, and harmonious; and for some moments I felt so struck with the transcendent beauty of the scene before me (so like what I imagine the garden of Eden must have been) that I became absorbed in thought—imagination, for the time, led me away, and even the elephants were forgotten: short-lived sensations, almost instantaneously passing away, for my eyes soon returned to earth, and my reverie was broken by Chineah laying before me several bunches of delicious grapes that grew temptingly on every side.

After having rested some little time, Googooloo and Naga took up the trail, and we continued the pursuit. As they pressed forward, with bodies half-bent and eyes gliding along the ground, they reminded one of hounds running by scent; but, unlike these, the trackers made no noise, seldom or never speaking when on trail, and then only in a subdued whisper. Tireless, used to constant warfare with the elements and struggles with the wild denizens of the forest, as the bloodhound loves the trail so did they, and hunger, thirst, weariness, all must be felt to an extreme degree before they would give it up.

We continued the pursuit for many long and weary hours, until at last night set in and arrested our progress, as the spoor was no longer to be discerned. Halting simultaneously, we held a brief consultation as to what was best to be done, and, after some deliberation, my gang, who were all men of jungle experience, and well-versed in forest signs, were unanimous in their desire to follow up the trail *by torchlight*, for it was yet early in the night, and many hours must intervene before we should have the light of the moon, as it would not rise until nearly midnight, and during this time the herd, which, from the freshness of the spoor, were evidently not very far ahead, might travel a long way.

I therefore determined to be at once on their heels, and lighting a large bull's-eye lantern (which one of the gang always carried) and branches of dry resinous wood, we continued the pursuit, following the trail almost as fast as before. I counted that we should get over many miles before morning, and perhaps even come up with the herd; at any rate, we might expect to fall in with them before the next night.

Notwithstanding we were tired and hungry, we did not linger, but followed up the spoor with every precaution, keenly scrutinizing the ground in advance of us, in the hope of perceiving the objects of our search.

After some time we descended into a deep valley, and there encountered an obstacle that proved not only a serious barrier to our progress, but almost brought our tracking to a termination. This was a

tract of *dense* bamboo-jungle, with thick underwood, which we could hardly penetrate without the constant use of our axes. Our lights also proved very insufficient, and for several long weary hours we followed the trail, the greater part of the time crawling on our hands and knees. At last the long-wished-for moon shone forth, lighting up the forest with her cheering rays. Darkness passed away, and the night became clear as day.

Extinguishing our torches, on we pressed with renewed vigour. The roar of water sounded in our ears from the direction towards which the trail was leading us, and after a short time we came to a formidable torrent, which, freshened by recent rains on the mountains, came tumbling down its rocky bed in a succession of foaming cataracts.

To my surprise, I found from the spoor that the herd had crossed, although by what means was not evident either to myself or any of the gang, as the stream was extremely rapid, and appeared too deep to be forded. Here and there, among the boiling, frothing eddies, broken rocks of greenish hue were seen above the surface, but they were only the crests of large boulders, and between them the stream ran dark and rapidly. How the young elephants, of which there were several in the herd, had managed to get over, I could not imagine, as no swimmer, however strong, could have stemmed the torrent for a moment; he must have been swept down and dashed to pieces against the rocks.

At last I bethought me that perhaps the "fresh" had come down only lately, and that the herd had crossed before the torrent became so swollen, and by placing sticks by the edge of the stream I found my opinion was correct, and that the volume of water was still increasing. This was certainly not satisfactory, to say the least of it; but "Never say die" was ever my motto, and we knew the elephants were on the other side, and that if we intended to be amongst them, we must go too. How? was the question. To cross where we were was impossible, but after some reconnoitring we found that below the falls the current ran much less rapidly, forming a kind of pool about a hundred yards across or more. This was not the first time that either I or my followers had crossed a river without a ford, and many a stronger current had I stemmed in my time than that then before me; the only difficulty was to get the guns and ammunition over dry.

After a moment's consideration, I made the gang collect a number of dry logs and bamboos, and with the aid of the stalks of creepers, which served as ropes, I tied them together and made a small raft, on which I securely tied the guns, tools, &c. I then stripped, and throwing my clothes on the top, cautiously entered the stream, and by laying hold of the raft, with the assistance of Chineah and Googooloo, pushed it before me. Plunge, plunge, plunge! I heard behind me, until the last of my gang had taken to the water, and was swimming silently to a smooth

ledge of rocks on the opposite side, where, one after another, we landed, donned our toggery, and made sure that our arms had not got wet; after which we clambered up the bank, and, by keeping along the stream, soon recovered the trail.

Feeling considerably refreshed with our bath, we made short work with what little cold provision we had left in our wallets, and forgetting our fatigue, once more pushed on at a rapid rate.

Hours rolled by, and daylight found us still on trail; hunger, fatigue, and weariness were all forgotten in the excitement attendant on the pursuit, for, from the freshness of the spoor, and other unmistakable signs, we knew the herd could not be far distant.

The utmost care was now necessary in following up the trail, as the slightest noise might have given the alarm: indeed, I felt apprehensive lest the elephants should get wind of us, as their senses are more acute in the early part of the morning than at any other time.

We had crossed a broad belt of open teak-forest, and were once more in dense bamboo-jungle, when suddenly I saw Googooloo, who was half-a-dozen paces ahead, make a stand and turn his head, as if to catch a sound; a low grunt (a sign of satisfaction) was followed by an expressive hiss (his ordinary mode of attracting attention), and then I felt as sure that game was afoot as any English sportsman could be on seeing his favourite dog point. I laid my ear to

the ground, but heard nothing, and the jungle was too thick to allow me to see any distance round ; I therefore carefully followed up the spoor, creeping along as cautiously as possible, when again one of Googooloo's peculiar sounds attracted my notice, and after listening attentively a few moments, I heard a distant, low, rumbling noise, which I immediately recognised as being that made by elephants from the water rattling in their stomachs.

I ordered Chineah and the rest of the gang to halt, and having looked to the powder in my nipples, and made sure of the direction from which the sounds proceeded, stole noiselessly forward, accompanied by Googooloo only, who carried a couple of spare guns. We soon came up with the rearmost of the herd, a group of five females, who were browsing upon the young and tender shoots of the bamboo and other succulent plants which abounded in that part of the jungle. As they were beneath my notice I gave them a wide berth, and Googooloo and I separated, in order that we might have a better chance of finding the trail of a bull.

I soon came across a spoor larger than any of the rest, and Googooloo not being in sight I followed it up alone. After half-an-hour's tracking, in which I passed a young male and three other females, I saw a huge tusker standing alone by several large boulders of rock, against one of which he was rubbing his hind-quarters.

Immediately I caught sight of him I dived into

the deeper jungle, and, by making a circuitous route, got well to windward of him. I then regretted that Googooloo was not with me, as I had no spare gun, and I felt nervous lest my prey might escape. However, there was no help for it, so, after carefully reconnoitring the ground, in order to avail myself of any cover it afforded, I crept forward on my hands and knees, and, after a few minutes' intensely exciting stalking, managed to ensconce myself behind a low ledge of rock, from whence I could observe every motion he made.

He was standing on three legs, the off hind-foot being raised from the ground, and leaning carelessly against the other, whilst the fore-part of his body was swinging to and fro. Although he was not more than twenty paces distant, I could not get a fair shot, as his head was turned directly away from me. I waited nearly ten minutes for a chance of his altering his position, during which I had ample time to admire his stately proportions and magnificent tusks, but he never moved an inch. I could not get round in front of him on account of the wind, and as I did not like to risk the chance of losing so fine a fellow by an uncertain shot that might not prove mortal, after a few seconds' deliberation I determined to try another plan, which, as I had not a spare gun, was attended with considerable danger.

I examined the ground carefully, so as to be prepared, in case I had to make a run of it, and then taking off my leather gaiters and extraneous clothing,

so as to have my limbs as free as possible, noiselessly crept on my hands and knees behind him, and placing the muzzle of my gun almost close to the centre of the hind-foot which was raised, I pulled both triggers almost instantaneously and sprang out of the way. A shrill shriek of agony followed the double report, and I just escaped a ferocious blow aimed at me with his trunk, being, fortunately, out of reach. I ran round to the back of the rock before I ventured to look over my shoulder, when, finding he was not on me, I reloaded as quickly as possible; this done, I felt secure, and again approached the scene of action.

I found my plan had proved completely successful. for my antagonist was entirely disabled. My gun (which was a double two-ounce smooth-bore, by Westley Richards) had been heavily loaded, having about six drachms of powder in each barrel; and the bones of the foot were so completely shattered by the double shot, he could not put it to the ground, and every time he attempted to make a step forward he fell heavily. He must have suffered intense agony, for he uttered most piteous cries between his bursts of rage. As I approached he strove to charge, with a shriek of despair, but he fell heavily to the ground, and, as he was rising to his knees, I stepped up and discharged both barrels into the hollow over the trunk, the contents of which, penetrating the brain, he fell, "never to rise again."

After having taken a cursory survey of "the spoils of the fallen," and made an estimate in my own mind

as to the probable weight of the ivory, I hastily reloaded and retraced my steps towards the spot where I had left Googooloo. A shrill whistle twice repeated soon brought him to my side, and I learnt that my shots, being so far distant, had hardly disturbed the herd, for most of them were still browsing in the same place. He showed me the spoor of another bull, which we followed for nearly a mile up a narrow ravine, or rather gorge, in the mountain, where we found him drinking in a rocky nullah, and accompanied by two females. After having watched his movements for a few moments, I saw that it was advisable to gain the opposite bank, as it was much higher, and afforded good cover. This I accomplished, after some trouble, for the underwood was very thick, by making a circuitous route, crossing the stream some distance to leeward, and creeping along the banks of the nullah until I got behind a tree, about thirty paces from the group.

Although I kept well under cover, I could see from the elephants' movements that their suspicions had been aroused, for they kept sniffing about with their trunks as if they were aware that "there was something strange in the wind."

At last the bull moved forward a couple of paces and stretched out his trunk, as if to discover from whence the taint in the air proceeded, at the same time fully presenting his broad forehead to my view. This was the opportunity I sought. I took a steady aim at the vulnerable spot, just over the root of the

trunk, and dropped him with a single ball, like a rabbit riddled with buck-shot.

The females, taken aback at the fall of their companion, rushed trumpeting down the stream, when just at this moment a cry from Googooloo attracted my attention to a crashing of underwood in the jungle close at hand, and I had hardly time to snatch up my second gun as a mighty bull and seven females dashed hurriedly past, at a distance of about fifty paces. I threw up my rifle, and, aiming behind the ear, let drive a couple of snap-shots for the chance of stopping him, the last of which took effect, for it brought him to his knees; but he immediately regained his legs, and, separating from the females, tore frantically through the forest, which he made resound with his angry roar.

I snatched my second spare gun from Goolooloo (a heavy two-ounce double rifle), and, jumping down the bank, ran with all speed to cut him off at the gorge, which was extremely narrow, as the torrent made its way between a huge cleft in the rock, through which I knew he must pass in order to join the rest of the herd. I was running down the bed of the stream, on either side of which rose high banks, when I heard a rattling noise among the stones behind me, and on turning my head I saw the wounded bull tearing after me, with his eyes flashing fire and his tail straight on end, about forty paces distant.

Speed I knew would not avail me; he would have been down upon me before I could have clambered

up the bank, so I swung round and dropped on my knee, to make a more steady aim.

On he charged with a fiendish shriek of revenge ; I let him come to within fifteen paces, when I let drive, aiming between his eyes (my favourite shot ; but whether it was that I was unsteady, being breathless from my run, or that my rifle, which weighed sixteen pounds, was too heavy, I know not ; for my left arm dropped the moment I pulled the trigger (not from nervousness, for I was perfectly cool and never lost my presence of mind for a moment), and my shot took effect four inches too low, entering the fleshy part of the root of the trunk instead of penetrating the brain. It failed to stop him, and before I could get out of the way the huge brute was on me ; I saw something dark pass over me, felt a severe blow, and found myself whizzing through the air ; then all was oblivion.

When I came to, I found myself lying on my face, in a pool of blood which came from my nose, mouth and ears. Although nearly choked with clotted gore, a sense of my perilous situation flashed across my mind, and I strove to rise and look after my antagonist, but he was nowhere to be seen.

I picked myself up, and although fearfully bruised and shaken, found that no bones were broken. I was lying on the top of the bank, although quite unable to account to myself how I got there.* In the dry bed

* The elephant must have flung me a considerable distance with his trunk, as the bank was upwards of six feet high.

of the nullah I saw my rifle, and after much painful exertion managed to crawl down and get it. The muzzle was filled with sand, which I cleared out as well as I could; and then, sitting by the edge of the stream, began to wash away the blood and bathe my face and head. Whilst so employed I heard a piercing shriek, and saw Googooloo rushing towards me, closely followed by the infuriated elephant, who was almost mad from the pain of his wounds. Luckily a hanging branch was in his way, and with the agility of a monkey he caught hold of it, and swung himself up the steep bank, where he was safe.

The elephant, baulked of his victim, rushed wildly backwards and forwards two or three times, as if searching for him, and then, with a hoarse scream of disappointment, came tearing down the bed of the nullah. I was directly in his path, and powerless to get out of the way. A moment more and I saw that I was perceived, for down he charged on me, with a fiendish roar of vengeance. With difficulty I raised my rifle, and, taking a steady aim between his eyes, pulled the trigger—it was my only chance. When the smoke cleared away, I perceived a mighty mass lying close to me. At last I had conquered. Soon after this I must have sunk into a swoon, for I hardly remember anything until I found myself lying in my hut, and B—— leaning over me.

It appears that Chineah and the gang had carried me in on a litter, and finding my body very much swollen from the severe blow I had received, my back

being black from the waist upwards, had applied a native remedy, and covered the bruised part with leeches, which had the effect of counteracting the inflammation, although I shall carry their marks to the grave. As it was, I was entirely laid up, and had to return to Oooty to recruit.

B—— sent a part of the gang to fetch in the ivory, which altogether weighed nearly three hundred pounds—not a bad bag for three days' “shekar.”

CHAPTER XIX.

“ Let us
Find out the prettiest daisied spot we can,
And make him with our pikes and partizans
A grave.” CYMBELINE.

THE GREAT ANAMALAI FOREST—TIGER HUNTING.

Our plan of operations.—The hunting-grounds.—Preparations.—The journey.—Jungle travelling.—Our bivouac.—A lonely glen.—Signs of game.—The ambuscade.—Forest signs and jungle melody.—Googooloo gives tongue.—The spoiler spoiled.—An unexpected rencontre.—A wounded tigress.—Her retreat stormed.—Fatal accident.—Retribution.—The Shekarry's grave.

TOWARDS the latter end of May, having become somewhat weary of the commonplace routine of ordinary cantonment-life in Ootacamund, I determined, before the monsoon broke, to have a fortnight's hunting with my old chum B——, in that immense tract of virgin forest which lies to the south of the Neilgherry mountains, and extends over the Anamalai range, and along the western Ghauts. This region, which in the most recent maps is still left blank as an “unexplored district,” is one continuous wilderness of mountains and dense waving forest, veined with broad rivers and streams, extending over an area of several hundreds of square miles, inhabited

only by a few wild, uncivilized tribes, said to be the aborigines of the country, who for ages have shrunk from intercourse with the rest of the world, living in hollow trees or caves, and subsisting upon wild fruits, jungle-roots, and such small animals as they can bring down with their arrows.

These woods, in which the sound of an axe is seldom heard, are the haunts of the largest denizens of the forest. Here vast herds of elephants and bison (*Bos gaurus*) wander through the leafy solitudes unmolested; and tigers, panthers, and bears are so numerous, that after nightfall they may be heard in different parts of the jungle howling and calling to each other with those peculiarly wild and deeply melancholy intonations which appall and strike awe into the hearts of those who are not accustomed to such serenades.

The natives in this part of the country have a strange superstition about these hunting-grounds. They say that in the inmost recesses of the forest, where the eye of man has never yet penetrated, there is a lake, to the banks of which elephants, when they feel the approach of dissolution, go *to die*. Perhaps this popular belief may in some measure be accounted for by the fact, that the body of an elephant that has died a natural death has rarely, if ever, been found in the woods. Some say that the remains of the dead are buried by their companions in the herd.

Hunting trips being everyday occurrences, but little time was required for preparation either by

myself or my companion. I examined my battery (which consisted of a pair of double rifles of ten-gauge by Purday, a pair of double smooth-bores by Westley Richards, carrying two-ounce round balls, and a couple of fowling-pieces), and saw that all were in perfect order, and fitted with ammunition.

I then paraded my "skekarries," or hunting-gang, which comprised Chineah, Googooloo, Naga, Veerapah, Hassan, the Gooroo, Ali, and Ramasawney, eight stalwart fellows, all well tried and true, and inspected their hunting-gear, clothing, and equipments, so as to make sure that all were in perfect marching trim, and fit to commence a jungle campaign. My baggage ponies having been re-shod, then passed muster with their burdens, consisting of a small hill-tent, carpet, blankets, cooking-apparatus, rice-bags, &c., and finally my dogs, four huge creatures, any two of which would bring a bear to bay, or a hog to a standstill.

In the mean time B—— paid a visit to Framjee's celebrated emporium for what the French term "*comestibles*," and filled out two pairs of large "cowry"* baskets, with everything necessary for the support of the "inner man," at the same time engaging a couple of stout coolies to carry them.

All being in readiness, I gave orders to Chineah, my head shekarry, to proceed at once, with the gang, guns, and baggage, to a hut I had built on a

* Round wicker baskets, which are slung at each end of a bamboo, and carried over the shoulder.

previous hunting expedition at the top of the Taketty Pass, which was four marches from Ooty, and there await our arrival.

Although this was the hottest season of the year, the temperature on the table-land of the Neilgherry Hills was rarely much over 80°, but knowing from experience that it would be at least 40° higher in the plains, we determined to get over that part of the journey by night, in palanquins, with posted bearers, so as to avoid any unnecessary exposure to the sun, and get fresh to our ground.

Having made arrangements with the police Ameen to this effect, on the next day but one after the departure of our people, we left my snug little domicile, Burnside Cottage, at about three in the afternoon, arriving at the travellers' bungalow, in Metrapoliam, at the foot of the Coonoor Pass, by sunset, dined, and afterwards proceeded to Coimbatore, where we remained only a few minutes, and again started for the Anamalai Hills, the base of which we reached by 10 A.M.

Here, to my surprise, I found Chineah, the Goo-roo, and one of B——'s followers with our rifles, who informed us that they had come across a couple of Mulchers (a jungle tribe), and had been with them to a ravine alive with game of all kinds, which they begged we would try before ascending the Ghauts. At first I did not care to alter my former plan of exploring the table-lands of the Anamalai range, but after a consultation with B——, it was resolved

to follow Chineah's advice; so, having donned our hunting-gear, we dismissed our bearers, who returned with the palanquins to Ooty, shouldered our rifles, and struck off by a jungle-track leading along the base of the hills.

The heat was intense in the extreme, and we perhaps felt it the more, having so lately left the vernal freshness of the hills; -but signs of game were to be seen on every side, which encouraged us to proceed, and after what B—— called "a moist tramp" of nearly four hours, we arrived at the dry bed of a mountain torrent, which we followed for nearly three miles through a narrow gorge between two densely-wooded hills. During this part of our route we were entirely sheltered from the oppressive beams of the sun by over-arching trees, which were so densely covered with convolvuli, and similar delicate climbers of every colour, as to form an impervious shade overhead; indeed, it seemed as if we were traversing a vast leafy bower.

At last, after a good hour's clambering over huge boulders of granite, ledges of rock, and loose shingle, we came to a bed of sand, where we recognised the pugs of two full-grown tigers, and innumerable slots of deer, hog, and jungle-sheep. Here, from a small open glade in the forest, I got a glimpse of our route, and found that we were approaching an apparently insurmountable barrier of mountains by a ravine so deep that nothing but the cloudless blue sky was to be seen overhead; whilst on each side frowned per-

pendicular cliffs and stupendous peaks, so high that it strained the eye to look upwards to their summits. Whilst we were admiring the impressive grandeur of the scenery, a dull roaring, like distant thunder, caught my ear, and on inquiry Chineah informed me that the sound proceeded from a cascade, near which we were to bivouac.

Having rested for a few minutes, we again pushed on, and shortly afterwards fell in with the rest of the gang and a party of Mulchers, who were busily engaged in the construction of a bamboo hut under an overhanging rock, which formed an impervious shelter against the piercing beams of the sun.

Feeling exhausted with our fag, after having paid a visit to B——'s investment in the cowry-boxes, and partaken of sundry refreshing drinks, we resolved to look out for a suitable place for a bathe, and strolled along the tortuous and winding bed of the watercourse for a short distance, until we came to a huge plateau of granite overlooking a wild, rocky glen, or cleft in the mountain, which looked as if it had been torn asunder by some convulsion of nature, for on three sides rose perpendicular cliffs, so high that the gigantic forest-trees which fringed the scarped edge of their summits looked diminutive as ferns. From the rugged side of one of these giddy heights, a mountain-stream came gushing down, roaring like distant thunder, as it fell foaming and boiling upon massive boulders of rocks below, and causing a misty vapour to arise, in which numberless mimic rainbows

appeared and vanished with magical rapidity. At the base of the fall was a clear pellucid pool, about two hundred yards in diameter, surrounded by live rocks of grey granite, rising high above the water's edge, except upon the side near which we were standing, where there was a shelving bank of sand.

"What a glorious place there is for a dip, in the shade of those overhanging rocks!" cried B——, after we had gazed for some moments upon the romantic beauty of the scene.

"Yes," I replied, "if we are sure that it is not infested with 'muggers' (alligators); but I must confess I should not like to venture the first plunge until I have made a careful examination of the bank, for I never saw a more likely-looking spot for such kind of vermin."

"You do not say so," replied he. "By Jove! how lucky it is that you are with me, for had I been alone, I should most assuredly have taken a header into that clear part without ever dreaming that such horrid brutes could be concealed in so lovely a spot."

"I have often met with them in such places," said I. "However, we can soon find out if there are any trails or prints of their claws upon the sand, where they are most likely to bask when the sun enters the ravine at mid-day, and if we do not find any, we will send in the dogs to make sure; but until this has been done, I should advise you to confine your ablutions to 'chatties' (earthen pots) of water on shore."

So, sending Chineah for the dogs, we clambered down the rock and strolled by the sand along the edge of the water.

Here we saw the fresh pugs of two tigers, a cheeta and several bears, besides the old spoors of elephant and bison, with innumerable slots of different kinds of deer, including the "sambur," or black *Rusa* deer, commonly called the Indian elk (*Rusa Aristoteles*), the "chetel," or spotted-deer (*Cervus axis*), and the "muntjac," or jungle-sheep (*Cervus muntjac*); besides the marks of a sounder of hog, a pack of jackals, peacocks, and jungle-fowl; but I could not distinguish any trail of alligators.

It was evident that this was the place where most of the wild animals of the surrounding jungle came to slake their thirst, so I determined to build a moat, or place of ambushade, on a huge isolated boulder of black rock which commanded all approach to the water within easy range of our rifles. As the sides were scarped, we had some trouble to get to the top, which was covered with bush, thorny brambles, and creepers, but with the aid of our axes we soon cleared a space sufficiently large for three or four of us to lie down at full length, on which we constructed a kind of hut, by stretching a "combeley" blanket over poles, and covering the outside with creepers, so as to make it resemble a bush from below, leaving loopholes all round to fire through; we then manufactured a rest for our rifles, and a bamboo ladder to go up and down more easily, after which we carpeted

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the interior and furnished it with a couple of mattresses, pillows, and sundry refreshments.

Whilst we were busy preparing our ambushade, a young buck spotted-deer came out of one of the "runs" leading towards the water, within pistol-shot distance, and was leisurely proceeding to drink, when he caught sight of some of our people down below, which startled him. He stopped, threw back his head, pawed the ground, and coolly retraced his steps, apparently but little alarmed at the sight of man. Had our rifles been near at hand, he might not have got back so easily, for venison is always desirable, especially when there are many mouths to feed.

I forbade any of our people to go near the pool, on the side frequented by the jungle animals, but made them draw what water they required in leathern buckets from the rocks, fearing lest their footsteps might betray our presence.

Our work being completed, we had a refreshing bath and adjourned to the hut, where we saw the stores distributed, so that each man received his allowance of meat, rice, curry-stuff, "ghee" (clarified butter), and tobacco.

Having dined, we inspected the arrangements that had been made for the comfortable housing of our people and baggage-animals, and then returned to the ambushade; Chineah, Naga, and Googooloo accompanying us, to keep a look-out for game, as we ourselves felt too fatigued with our day's fag to depend much on our own watchfulness.

As a light air was blowing from us across the water, and we were perfectly concealed from view, some ten feet above the level of the ground, there was no danger of the scent of tobacco being "winded" from the jungle, so we lighted our cheroots (a most unorthodox proceeding when lying in ambush for large game) and amused ourselves with observing the different species of animal life that frequented that lonely spot.

The margin of the lake was visited from time to time by different kinds of aquatic birds and waterfowl, amongst which I noticed a flock of flamingoes with their magnificent rose-coloured plumage, stately pelicans, besides ibises, storks, herons, egrets, plovers, sand-larks, and crows, which latter birds assembled in noisy groups and seemed to revel in the luxury of a bath. A toucan, with its awkward flight, was seen wending its way from tree to tree in search of the reptiles and small birds on which it feeds, and a jungle-cock, whose plumage gleamed like gold in the rays of the declining sun, came with his consorts and scratched up the ground for food within a dozen yards of our hiding-place.

Each period of the day has its accustomed visitants, every hour has its "certain signs," that can be read and understood by those only to whom jungle voices are familiar, and who, from long habit and experience, have been enabled to observe and mark the systematic order of Nature's handiwork.

During the intense heat of the day, whilst the sun

is still high above the meridian, all animated nature seems to yield to his overpowering influence. A strange stillness, a profound silence, reigns throughout the jungle, which in early morning seemed to teem with life and motion. Every living creature disappears into the deepest shade of the woods, in order to escape from the exhausting heat and oppressive glare; except, perhaps, the eagle, hawk, and falcon, who are seen hovering overhead in circles, like specks in the cloudless sky, or skimming, with strange wild cries, over the tops of the jungle in search of their prey, and the green enamelled dragon-flies that still flit over the water from leaf to leaf. Then the sturdy hunter, overcome with lassitude, suspends his toil, and seeks the grateful shade of some gigantic forest-tree or overhanging rock, where he reposes until the mid-day heat is passed, whilst his dog, also sharing in the universal languor which seems at that hour to oppress the whole face of nature, lies panting upon the ground, with his legs extended to the utmost, and his tongue hanging far out of his mouth.

The weary hours roll on, and nature revives; the woods again resound with the melody of the voice of birds; butterflies, of varied hue, flutter across the open glades; bees flit from flower to flower; and lustrous beetles, exhibiting metallic hues of green and blue, that rival the deepest shades of the emerald and the sapphire, hover round in circles, making a peculiar booming noise from the flutter of their wings. Myriads of insects keep up a perpetual hum in the

solitudes of the jungle, and other gentle sounds murmur softly from every side, like spirits in the air, and produce an effect singularly strange, soothing, and dreamy. At times, above this jungle melody, may be distinguished the distant cry of the peacock, the shrill wild note of jungle-fowl, the call of the coppersmith, the tapping of the woodpecker against some hollow tree, the chattering of a troop of monkeys as they pass in the distance, bounding from bough to bough; the peculiarly soft and melancholy note of the turtle-doves, as they flutter in pairs from tree to tree; or the shrill screams of flights of paroquets, whose brilliant plumage shines with exquisite lustre in the light of the sun, as they dash close past, unconscious of danger in their forest home.

As the day declines, birds of all kinds are seen returning homeward from their distant feeding-grounds; pelicans rise heavily on their unwieldy wings from the marshes and wend their way to their nests on the highest trees in some secluded spot. Flying-foxes leave the shady grove where they have hung suspended during the heat of the day, and are seen in numbers darkening the sky as they roam through the twilight; whilst multitudes of bats flit about in all directions in search of the insects on which they feed.

As the sun sets, moths of all kinds issue from their retreats, and mosquitos are constantly heard buzzing about, increasing in the audacity of their attacks as the night wears on. The shrill voices of innumerable

crickets, the croaking of frogs, and the continual hum of other insects, keep up a perpetual serenade long after darkness has covered the earth. Then is heard the whooping of the great rock-monkeys, the bark of the elk, the mournful howling of the hyena, the unearthly shrieking of jackals, the trumpeting of elephants as they crash through the underwood; at intervals the distant roar of a prowling tiger is re-echoed among the hollow arches of the forest, as he leaves his lair, in its inmost recesses, to search in the plains for prey; and great horned owls flit past on muffled wings with strange sepulchral cries, like evil spirits of darkness.

All these nocturnal animals return to their haunts in the deep jungle on the first appearance of dawn, when the jungle-cock sounds the "réveille," and pea-fowl are heard in all directions calling to their mates. Herds of bison and deer retire slowly from the open glades where they have pastured during the night, and again seek the shade of the thick cover. As light increases, the notes of the earliest of the feathered songsters are heard; and herons, cranes, and waders, may be seen on high, soaring away in the direction of their feeding-grounds.

At this early hour there is generally a cool breeze, and the morning air is fresh and bracing; but very shortly the whole of the eastern horizon glows with ruddy lustre, and the sun bursts forth in a blaze of living light, and seems to travel on his way in the heavens with much more rapidity than in northern

climes. This is the moment for the lover of the beautiful to see the forest, for the dewdrops on the leaves and ground sparkle like brilliants, and at no other time are the varied colours of the verdure so vivid. The lights and shades show to the best advantage, and a peculiarly harmonious charm reigns over the whole face of Nature, which must strike upon the heart even of the most apathetic spirit, and make him feel, with the great poet, that

“There is a pleasure in the pathless woods.”

But I am digressing, and must return to our ambuscade, where we were lying at our ease, whilst Chineah and Googooloo kept watch. Numbers of pea-fowl, jungle-fowl, and spur-fowl, came to drink from time to time, and their wild cries were heard on every side of the deeply-wooded valley. Presently we heard the low bark of a buck-elk calling to his hinds, and as the sun was sinking below the horizon the roar of a tiger awoke the echoes of the surrounding hills, and was immediately answered by another, at no great distance from the lake. Pea-fowl took up the cry on every side, and the wood resounded with the voices of wild animals. Chineah and Googooloo smiled grimly at each other as they caught up each cry, and named the animal that it came from, and each gave me a significant look as I proceeded to put fresh caps on my pet rifle, which I had previously carefully loaded.

“Yon forest music goes cheerily, Hal, and does

one more good than all the *sol-fa-ing* we have lately heard at Ooty," whispered B——.

"Yes, Ned, it strikes upon the heart of a ranger of the woods like an old well-loved strain upon a wanderer's ears; but I imagine that we shall have a view of the performers before morning, as the Mulchers say there is no other water about here nearer than the Bowani, and it is evident from the pugs we saw on the sand that they frequent this place."

Just at this moment we heard a movement in the bushes, and an old grey monkey, evidently a scout, came creeping cautiously into the plain. After peering about a few moments in a very inquisitive manner, seeing all appeared clear, he turned towards the wood, uttering a sharp cry, and immediately a whole troop of his followers came leaping and swinging themselves from the trees, screaming, chattering, fighting, and making grimaces at each other, as they rushed frantically to the water's edge to quench their thirst. Then, after gambolling about for a little time and picking up a few berries, they again disappeared in the woods. Towards dusk two jungle-sheep followed, and remained for some time, but we allowed them to retreat unmolested. Shortly afterwards my attention was attracted by a low grunt from Googooloo, whom I saw cautiously putting his head forward and raising his body, so as to get a better view of something, whilst he motioned to Naga to hand me my rifle.

"Kya hy?" (what is it?) whispered I. Googooloo

made no answer, but still continued to strain his eyes in the direction of a large low bush about thirty yards from the place of our concealment, at the same time making a sign with his hand for me to wait. We remained for some minutes in the utmost silence, all of us keeping a look-out through the loop-holes, but nothing was to be seen.

“Kuch na hy” (there is nothing), at length whispered Chineah, who was rather jealous of Googooloo’s having drawn attention to a sound which his quick ear had not caught up, and B—— again lay down, fancying it was a false alarm. I, however, remained on the alert, having the same confidence in the Yanadi’s warning as a huntsman would have when his best hound gave tongue, or a sportsman when his favourite dog made a dead point. I had often previously trusted to his natural instinct and quickness of hearing and scarcely ever found him wrong, so I kept my eye upon him, prepared to act. Although he maintained a dignified silence, I could see by the contemptuous curl of his lip that he was evidently disgusted with Chineah’s remark and vexed at B——’s mistrust; but when he saw, as his eye caught mine, that I believed in him, he gave his accustomed grunt of satisfaction, and continued to peer into the dark tangled forest before us.

A few minutes passed, when he again turned his head on one side, as if to drink in some fancied sound, and I noticed a grim smile of satisfaction illumine his expressive face as he raised both hands

over his eyes, as if to get a better view of something. At this moment I caught sound of the light crackling of a twig, and a rustling as if some animal was moving amongst dry leaves, and again was heard Googooloo's low grunt as he pointed to the bush which had before attracted his attention, whispering beneath his breath, "Bagh hy!" (there is a tiger!) I cocked both barrels of my rifle, moved noiselessly forward, and kept it pointed in the direction indicated, but nothing was to be seen, although we waited for many moments in anxious suspense.

Chineah, who twigged the noise this time, now took the Yanadi's right hand, and pressed it to his own forehead, a silent acknowledgment that he had been in the wrong, and from the satisfactory smile that passed over Googooloo's face, I could see that peace was made between the two friends and rivals in "forest lore."

"Do you think it was a tiger, Hal?" whispered B——, "I rather suspect it must have been a jungle-fowl scratching up the ground, or a snake gliding amongst the leaves."

"It might have been the latter," I replied, "but jungle-fowl are all gone to roost by this time, and I have often heard a tiger or a panther steal along with as little noise."

For a time an intense quiet reigned, not a leaf stirred, and no sound was heard but the dull monotonous roar of falling waters or the plaintive cry of a stray plover in search of his companions. The sun

had been gone down some time, and the moon, which was then at the full, had not risen sufficiently high for her silvery light to penetrate the deep ravine in which we were.

Both B——'s patience and his cheroot were well-nigh exhausted, and as I saw he could hardly keep himself awake, I bade both him and Chineah sleep whilst Googooloo and myself kept the first watch. We remained for nearly a couple of hours listening anxiously to every sound that issued from the jungle, and although during this time we distinctly heard the growling of a bear just below us, and could distinguish in the gloom the dark forms of a sounder of hog wallowing in the pool, still there was not sufficient light to take aim, and I did not pull trigger. At last the moon appeared over the scarped crest of the mountain, sailing in a cloudless sky—a flood of light glistened like silver on the lake, and caused every object to be seen as distinctly as at noon-day.

Struck with the fairy-like beauty of the scene before me, I became absorbed in thought, from which I was roused by Googooloo laying his hand on my shoulder and pointing to something standing in the shade of a lofty forest tree. At the same moment I heard the low short bark of a spotted-deer, and a fine buck with broad-spreading antlers came forcing his way through the tangled brushwood, and stood before us in bold relief. I threw up my rifle, brought the sight to bear upon his shoulder, and was just about to pull trigger when a huge monster of a tiger sprang from the very

bush that Googooloo had been so attentively watching, and fastened upon his shoulder with a low growl. Like a flash of lightning, my trusty rifle belched forth its deadly contents right and left: a roar, a smothered whine, followed the double report, and the stricken brute rolling over and over, was gasping in its last agonies. A convulsive movement was succeeded by a stifled groan, a moaning cry, a bubbling sound, and all was still.

“What have you killed, Hal?” cried B——, awakened by the shots, and cocking his rifle. “Ha! ha! I see—a fine pair of horns too—but he is not dead,” he continued, raising his piece and putting an end to the poor buck, who was still struggling on the spot where he had been struck down.

“Look a little to the right, Ned, under the shade of the bush,” replied I, “and you will see the result of my shots—he felled the deer.”

“A *yaller hair*, by the powers!” exclaimed B——. “Well, you are in luck; but it serves me right for not believing in the Yanadi’s warning.”

“Yes, Googooloo was not mistaken, for the tiger must have been lying in wait in that bush for some hours before,” I replied, as I finished reloading. We then descended from our place of concealment, and were examining the dead tiger, when Naga, whom I had sent to the hut to call up some of the people to help to carry away the carcass, came rushing back with fear depicted on his countenance, exclaiming that he had seen another tiger.

Beckoning Chineah and Googooloo to follow with spare guns, we both rushed down the pathway that the people had cut through the bush, as a short way to the hut, in which Naga said he had come face to face with the tiger, and sure enough there were the pugs close to the prints of Naga's toes. The tiger must have been as much astonished at the rencontre as the man, for he had evidently turned back, as we could tell by the trail.

Whilst we were examining the pugs, in order to note which direction he had taken, my attention was attracted by a low whimper, followed by a yawn, which appeared to proceed from the bed of the watercourse, and after some little trouble we forced our way through the thick underwood to the bank, from whence we saw a tigress coolly picking her way among the stones, in the bed of the "nullah" (watercourse). We put up our rifles and both fired at the same moment; uttering a deep angry growl, she fell forward, evidently hard hit, although the distance was nearly two hundred yards, and the light none of the best. When she rose, I thought her foreleg seemed to dangle from the shoulder as if broken, but she still went on, notwithstanding we let fly again and evidently hit her, for she gave a terrific roar and turned short round as if to charge, but her heart seemed to fail, and she slunk into some cover close at hand in the centre of the nullah.

"The light is not good enough for accurate shooting at this range, Hal," said B——, as we were reloading

our rifles, "but I do not think she can travel far. I am sure she carries lead in her."

"Of that there can be no doubt," I replied, "as I heard the soft 'thud' of the bullet distinctly; however, we will follow her up, for I saw her enter that isolated patch of bush in the nullah, from which it would be an easy matter to drive her out with a few rockets. I was only considering whether we had not better wait until daylight, when we could almost make sure of her, for the moon will only favour us a short time longer, as the gorge will be in darkness as soon as she sinks below yon wall of rock."

"No time like the present, Hal," cried B——, climbing down the steep bank into the bed of the nullah; "so send Naga to the hut for rockets and some of the people, whilst you, I, and Googooloo watch the cover in case she may attempt to steal away."

Knowing from experience the difficulty of making accurate shooting by the light of the moon, which is very deceitful, it was with some reluctance that I ordered Chineah to take a rifle and go with Naga to the hut for the rest of the gang, and I regretted it almost as soon as I had done so, for I felt a strange presentiment of some accident occurring, being aware of the extreme danger of beating out a wounded tiger from thick cover in such an uncertain light; however, I determined to take every precaution, and clambering down into the nullah, followed by Googooloo, we watched each side of the cover in which the tigress

had been seen to enter, until Chineah and the rest of the gang, accompanied by our coolies, joined us. We then formed up in line, B—— taking the right and I the left flank, with Chineah well provided with rockets in the centre, and all the rest armed with the short spears they generally carried when beating the jungle.

Having distinctly warned them not on any account to straggle or separate, and seen that our spare guns were at hand, we moved into the cover, which, although not more than fifty yards long by twenty broad, was very dense, being covered with low tangled bushes and coarse grass about four feet high. We could easily have driven the tigress out by firing the grass, but I did not do so as the blaze would have scared all the game away from the surrounding jungles. We had beaten our way steadily through almost half the patch, when we heard a low grumbling, which appeared to proceed from a large bush much overgrown with creepers and high spear-grass.

“Dekho! sahib, dekho!” (look, sir, look!) cried Chineah, throwing a couple of lighted rockets into the retreat, which evidently annoyed her, although they had not the effect of causing her to break—for she set up a low angry growl which lasted some time. Two or three times I thought I saw the bush shake as if she was about to spring, and once I caught a hurried glimpse of her outline, and threw up my rifle, but I put it down again as I did not like to fire a chance shot with uncertain aim.

Again Chineah's rockets flew hissing about her, and one of them caused her to move, for B—— caught sight of her, and let drive right and left, when out she sprang with an appalling roar, and struck down poor Ali, who, notwithstanding my orders, had separated himself from the rest in order to pick up a stone to throw into the bush. His piercing death-shriek rang through the night air, striking terror on every heart; and, although I felt that I was too late to save him, I determined he should be amply revenged, and dashed forward towards the spot where the infuriated tigress was savagely growling, as she still shook the senseless but quivering body of her victim. No sooner did I get a glimpse of her, than I knew that I was perceived, for with a short, angry roar she left the corpse and crouched low to the ground, with her head down, her back arched, and her tail lashing her heaving flanks. At this moment, before she could make a spring that might have proved fatal, carefully aiming between her eyes, which glared upon me like balls of fire, I let drive—she reared up, full-length, on her hind-legs, pawed the air, and fell back dead.

Vengeance satiated, I went up to poor Ali, whom I found shockingly mutilated; his death must have been instantaneous, as the tigress, with the first blow of her paw, had crushed in the skull (for the brains lay scattered about the place) and then made her teeth meet in his throat and shoulder, breaking the

arm in two places, and lacerating the fleshy part of the thigh.

B—— and the gang came up shortly afterwards, and long and loud were the lamentations, for Ali was much liked by them all, and a great favourite with his master, to whom he had ever proved a willing and devoted follower.

We bound up his head, covered his face with a cloth, and by the aid of our axes constructed a litter of bamboos, on which we carried him towards the hut, where Yacoob Khan, Hassan, and Cassim, B——'s "kidmudjar" (butler), who were also Mussulmen, performed the last rites of "the Faithful;" and we buried him under an overhanging rock, near the lake; the nose, whiskers, and claws of the tigress had been previously thrown into the grave.

To show our respect to the memory of the shekarry who had come to such an unfortunate end, we all attended, and, at the request of the gang, three volleys were fired over his grave. Strange to say, hardly had the echoes of the last report died away, rumbling amongst the hills, than the roaring of another tiger was distinctly heard several times.

Whilst the grave was being filled in, many of the gang were much affected, but not a word was uttered by any, except Chineah, who, with his eyes still streaming with tears for the loss of his companion, pronounced the following oration: "Boht utcha shekarry tha, lakin murgia, kya kurna? Nusseeb hy." (He was a very good shekarry, but he is dead—

what can we do? It is his fate.) Then each man, fetching a large stone, placed it reverentially over the grave, so as to form a kind of cairn, and making salaam to both of us, returned to the hut, we following with heavy hearts. As it still wanted some hours to dawn, we turned into bed: but that fearful death-shriek still rang in my ears, and, although tired and weary, I could not sleep.

CHAPTER XX.

“The first physicians by debauch were made;
Excess began, and sloth sustains the trade;
By chase our long-lived fathers earned their food,
Toil strung the nerves and purified the blood;
Better to hunt in fields for health unbought,
Than see the doctor for a nauseous draught.”

THE GREAT ANAMALAI FOREST—(*continued*).—BISON HUNTING.

Our hut.—A gigantic carp.—Fish shooting.—His dimensions.—Discovery of a cave; an exploring party.—The tiger's spoils.—His dimensions.—“Away with melancholy.”—Chineah's reconnaissance and bag.—Our open council.—Jungle harmony.—Our proceedings and plan for the morrow.—The turn-out.—The start.—A hard fag.—A fresh trail of bison struck.—Googooloo has the ear of a hare.—Two buck-elk and a hind bite the dust.—We follow up the bison's trail.—Heavy work.—Land-leeches.—The find.—A heavy bag and a good day's work.—The gigantic dimensions of the patriarch of the herd.—The game bushed.—Again *en route*.—A teak forest.—The head of the fall.—Magnificent views.—Our bivouac.

BEING fatigued with our night-adventure and the previous day's fag, it was late in the afternoon before either B—— or myself made our appearance outside the tent, which, notwithstanding the intense heat of the weather, was comparatively cool and comfortable, being completely shaded from the scorching rays of the sun by the overhanging rocks above.

Chineah, Googooloo, and a couple of Mulchers

had gone into the forest to reconnoitre and look out for trails, and the Gooroo and the rest of the gang were busily engaged in denuding the dead tigers of their spoils.

After breakfast we strolled towards the lake, where we found Hassan, who attracted our attention to an enormous fish which lay basking as if asleep on the surface of the water, whilst several others of the same species, but smaller, kept rising from time to time in different parts of the pool. He informed us that he had been trying for several hours to catch one of these monsters with a rod, but that they were too cunning to take any bait. Knowing from experience that Hassan was a first-rate fisherman, I felt sure that I (who at the best of times am but a bungler with the rod) should have a poor chance of succeeding if he could not, so I left B—— to amuse himself with bait and fly, whilst I returned to the hut to make preparations more in my line.

I took a common musket which Chineah used for wild-fowl shooting, and to the centre of the iron ramrod I firmly attached a piece of double wire, about two yards in length, to the end of which I fastened a strong log-line. This done, I loaded the piece with powder and a thick felt-wadding, and then inserted the ramrod, with the flat head downwards, keeping it in its place in the centre of the bore with a second wad which fitted tightly in the muzzle.

My preparations completed, I returned to the pool,

and, creeping up as cautiously as possible, I got to within twenty paces of the huge fellow who was so coolly enjoying his "siesta," took steady aim and fired. The ramrod flew like an arrow true to the mark, passing through the fish and dragging the wire and part of the line with it. Immediately the creature found itself wounded it sprang high out of the water, and then dived, pulling so hard that our hands were badly cut with the cord running so fast through them as we gave him play.

For some time it raced round and round the pool, but at length seemed to grow exhausted, and allowed us to pull it to the surface of the water, when, as if endued with fresh vigour, it gave another great spurt, and again spun round and round, until at times I felt afraid that the cord would break. After a good hour's play it turned on its belly and gave in, and we managed to land it with some trouble on account of the great weight.

It was evidently of the carp species, having large round scales, one dorsal fin, forked tail with rounded lobes, and yellow olive sides, deepening to black on the back. Not having any scales at hand, we could not determine its weight exactly, but I constructed a rude pair with some ropes and a bamboo accurately suspended in the centre, and by that we made out the weight to be about sixty-three pounds, as it weighed down two bags and a quarter of shot, which were supposed to hold twenty-eight pounds when full. The flesh proved to be coarse, rank, and tough, but

some of the gang, who made part of it into a curry, said it was not bad eating.

As we were strolling about the ravine with our rifles whilst the gang were engaged in skinning the dead tigress, B—— discovered the entrance of a cave in the scarped overhanging cliff near our hut, and having nothing better to do we determined to explore it. Naga and Ramasawmy were accordingly despatched for torches, blue-lights, matches, etc., and after carefully examining our rifles, so as to be ready in case we found it tenanted by bears or hyenas (not an unlikely occurrence), we crept in, Naga leading with a torch, I following with B——, and Ramasawmy with another torch bringing up the rear.

The entrance was about four feet high and three broad, but it shortly became much more lofty, and from the light of our torches we saw numbers of pointed stalactites hanging from the roof in every direction which threw perplexing shadows as we advanced, and every now and then made us think that some animal was moving towards us.

After proceeding for about forty yards, we came to a vast chamber, where we were very much annoyed by myriads of small bats that, alarmed at our intrusion, came dashing up against our faces, and almost put out the torches.

Having peered about carefully, to make sure there were no beasts of any kind likely to molest us, I lighted a couple of blue-lights, which enabled us to see every part of the grotto distinctly. The cavern

appeared to be about seventy yards long by forty wide, and varying from ten to sixty feet in height; it was vaulted with live rock, covered all over with elegantly-formed stalactites which glittered like brilliants from the reflection of the blue-lights. The ground was very uneven, and covered with fine sand, except on one side, where there were enormous boulders of black granite. We saw several fissures and crevices which appeared to be passages stretching out further in different directions into the bowels of the earth, but did not care to explore them, on account of the close heat and insupportable stench, as well as for fear of snakes and scorpions, several of which reptiles we discerned moving about the place.

We therefore wrote our names and the date on a huge slab of smooth rock with charcoal, for the benefit of any one who might come after us, and retraced our steps into daylight, glad to breathe the fresh air once more.

We found that the Gooroo and Veerapah had finished skinning the tigress, and were busily engaged in searching for our bullets; she had received five wounds, besides the last, which entered between the eyes and penetrated the brain, causing instantaneous death. The tiger had been skinned in the morning, having been previously carried some distance away from the lake for fear the scent of blood might taint the air, and prevent other animals from approaching the spot to drink. He proved to be a fine specimen, his dimensions being as follows :—Length from tip of

nose to point of tail, 10 ft. 2 in.; length of tail, 3 ft. 1 in.; girth of body, 6 ft. 1 in.; girth round fore-arm, 2 ft. 10 in.; height at shoulder, 3 ft. 9 in.; circumference of head, 3 ft. 5 in. The tigress was much less, not measuring more than 9 ft. 5 in. from the tip of the nose to the point of the tail, and her limbs smaller in proportion.

The melancholy fate of poor Ali had spread a gloom upon us all, and the camp, which usually resounded with mirth, seemed strangely still and silent; so, to give the people something else to think about, I ordered a couple of sheep to be killed and distributed with an extra allowance of tobacco, which had the desired effect, for in the course of a short time cooking-pots and brass curry-dishes were boiling and bubbling on every side, and the busy hum of voices was heard throughout the bivouac as usual.

Towards evening, Chineah and his party returned from their reconnaissance with three young "squeakers" (hog), which the dogs had captured alive, and they reported that they had come across a large herd of bison, browsing in some bamboo jungle half-way up the hill, and had left them undisturbed, so that we should most likely find them near the place on the morrow.

After having dined substantially upon a prime haunch of roast venison and grilled sucking-pig, we adjourned to our camp-fire, which was lighted in a deep cleft of the rock, where it could not be well seen at any distance from the surrounding jungle;

and here we found the gang and all our people assembled, according to their usual custom when out in the jungle on a "shekar" expedition. The Gooroo and Veerapah were enlivening the party with some extemporary chanting, and at the same time accompanying themselves on the "sitarr" and "sarinda,"* whilst Chineah and the coolies performed on tom-toms, and Ramasawmy gave occasional discordant flourishes on the cholera horn, which we were obliged to decline, as B—— declared it would make his dinner disagree with him.

As we took our seats on a carpet spread over a heap of dry leaves which had been prepared for us, the concert ceased, and each man produced his pannikin or cocoa-nut shell, for it was my custom to give every one in camp a glass of rakee, and tobacco or a cheroot, when we assembled in council round the camp-fire in the evening to consult as to the morrow's proceedings. As soon as the grog had been served out, and all were enjoying the fragrant weed, I opened the proceedings by expressing my regret that such an untoward event should have befallen the gang as to lose one of their number; but I explained to them that poor Ali had lost his life by disobeying my positive orders in foolishly straggling from the rest, and I hoped his sad fate would be a warning to the gang to be more careful in future. I also suggested that the gang should each subscribe some small sum towards making up a purse for his father (an old

* Rude instruments somewhat resembling the violin and guitar.

pensioned Havildar), to which B—— and I would contribute a hundred rupees; and I was glad to see that when Chineah went round with his cocoa-nut shell, every one present, even to the coolies, put in his rupee, or whatever he could afford.

We then proceeded to deliberate on the plan for the morrow, and to detail each man his duty. Veerapah and Naga, with two Mulchers, were to ascend the Ghaut on the left, to find out if the Carders (a jungle tribe who inhabited that side of the mountain), had seen any elephants lately, and afterwards to join us at the head of the fall. Hassan was to go into Coimbatore with notes from B—— to K—— and C——, informing them of our whereabouts, in case they could manage to join our party. Ramasawmy was to continue the preparation of the skins, and Chineah, Googooloo, and two Mulchers, were to accompany us in a trip up the side of the ravine, where the herd of bison had been seen. These matters being settled, we sat smoking and chatting for a couple of hours, and then turned in.

Next morning the moon had only just set, and there was but a slight tinge of grey in the eastern sky, when my factotum "Five Minutes" entered the hut with hot coffee, flavoured with eau-de-vie, which is the best morning-cup for a sportsman when in the jungle, as it prevents any ill effects arising from inhaling the vapour which still hangs upon the ground at that early hour. Our toilet was soon completed, and on stepping outside the hut we found the

gang all wrapped up in their combleys and crouched over a wood fire, for the early morning was damp and chilly : so I ordered a glass of grog to be served out, and Chineah distributed the spare guns, blankets, stores, &c., that each had to carry in case of our being benighted in the jungle, which was a common occurrence.

In tropical climates, the interval between the first faint glimmering of dawn and daylight is very short, and as soon as we could distinguish objects pretty clearly, we entered the forest, where we heard jungle-cocks already crowing merrily.

The first living creatures we encountered were two great hooded-owls, who, like drowsy revellers after their nightly carouse, sailed hooting past, leisurely flapping their wings as they returned to their haunts in some hollow tree. Shortly afterwards we surprised a troop of monkeys who were evidently making their way towards the pool for a morning draught, but who fled, skipping from branch to branch, chattering and showing their teeth as soon as they detected our presence. Every now and again the dun sides of deer flashed for an instant before us, as they bounded across the open vistas of the forest and disappeared in the dense cover. The fresh morning air was loaded with the perfume of different flowering jungle-plants, and the forest resounded with the melody of feathered songsters.

We followed the trail that Chineah's party had made in their reconnaissance the day before, and

after an hour's painful climbing up the dry bed of a mountain-torrent, filled with loose round stones which rolled from under the feet at every step, and somewhat tried our powers as mountaineers, we arrived at a natural clearing in the midst of the dense forest where the gang had seen the bison browsing the day before. We examined the ground carefully, and found numbers of old marks, but no fresh ones, so we continued our route up the side of the mountain, and after a couple of hours' severe toil found ourselves in a patch of bamboo-jungle, where Chineah detected the fresh trail of a herd of bison.

Being thoroughly exhausted and done up with our exertions, we sat down upon a ledge of rock to regain our breath and rest ourselves before following up the trail, and were indulging in the indescribable luxury of weak brandy-panee and cheroots, never more enjoyed than in the jungle, when an exclamation from Googooloo caused us both to jump on our feet and seize our rifles that were leaning at our heads against a tree. I made a motion to our people to lie flat on the ground, and listened for a couple of minutes without hearing anything; but a glance at Googooloo's speaking features told me that he had caught sound of something, and I remained on the alert.

Just at that moment we heard a sharp bark, which I knew came from an elk; and, stealing as gently as possible to a ledge of rock which commanded a view of the slope, I had the satisfaction of

beholding a herd of sambur feeding in a glade about eighty yards below us. A fine stag with sweeping antlers was grazing, unconscious of danger, within easy range, and a second was lying down in the shade chewing the cud, surrounded by hinds.

“Now, Ned,” whispered I to B——, who had joined me, “take that fellow well behind the shoulder, and he’s your own.”

He raised his rifle, took deliberate aim, fired, and the stag, leaping with a convulsive bound high into the air, fell dead. The second hart, startled by the shot, sprang on his feet, and threw up his head with a wild snort, which gave me a fair shot, and I sent a two-ounce ball crashing into his brain, when he tumbled heavily forward in the high grass; and, without removing the rifle, I brought the sight to bear upon a fat doe and dropped her with a broken shoulder; but she immediately regained her feet, and would have given us a long run, or perhaps have got off altogether, if B—— had not given her the contents of his second barrel, which again rolled her over, and, whilst she was struggling, Chineah sprang forward and buried his long knife in her chest: her dark, languid eye rolled wildly round for a moment, she distended her wide nostrils, and gasped painfully for breath, heaved a convulsive sigh, stretched out her limbs, and all was still.

We immediately set to work and broke up the deer; and, after reserving a portion for present use, slung the remainder by creepers to the branch of a

tree, tying a red pocket-handkerchief like a streamer, to keep off the vultures, who otherwise would soon have scented it out and left us nothing but the bones. I also despatched one of the Mulchers with the heads to the hut, as the horns were good, giving him orders to collect some of his tribe to carry down the venison, and leave the skins with my servants.

This little matter arranged, we followed up the spoor of the bison, and in a little time fell in with the trail of a large herd, which, from unmistakable signs, we knew could not be far in advance.

It was very lucky that we came provided with leech-gaiters, made of very fine long-stockings, which we wore over our ordinary hose and breeches, and under the gaiters, as we found the land-leeches swarming in the damp grass and rank vegetation. These pests of the jungle are very insignificant in size, not being above an inch in length, or thicker than a knitting-needle; but when distended with blood they attain double that length and are about as thick as a good-sized quill. They have the power of planting one extremity on the ground, and poisoning themselves erect to watch for prey, towards which they advance rapidly by doubling up the body and holding on with their head and tail. They are of a yellowish-brown colour, streaked with black, with one greenish line along the whole length of the back, and a yellow one on each side. Their bites scarcely give any pain at the time, the punctures being so small as hardly to be perceptible, but they cause an

uncomfortable irritation, and with persons in a bad state of body often occasion nasty ulcers, which are slow to heal. The gang were accustomed to smear their naked legs with some peculiar kind of grease mixed with ashes, the scent of which prevented the leeches from biting, otherwise they would have been seriously inconvenienced by their attacks.

After following the trail for some miles, Chineah and Googooloo, who were creeping along a ragged hollow, which appeared to have been the pathway of an impetuous torrent, some little distance in front, made a sign to us to keep silent, and shortly afterwards they beckoned us to advance. With great caution we crept noiselessly forward, stopping from time to time to listen, and after crawling on our hands and knees for nearly a hundred yards, we gained the crest of the hill, where we had the satisfaction of seeing a large herd of bison quietly browsing on the green herbage in a patch of open teak-forest.

Having satisfied myself that we were well to leeward, and in no danger of being discovered by their remarkably keen scent, I raised myself cautiously behind the trunk of a tree to reconnoitre; and after pointing out to B—— a fine bull, who, surrounded with cows, was lazily nibbling the young and tender shoots of a clump of bamboos, about a hundred yards distant, I begged him to reserve his fire until he heard my signal, as I intended to try and stalk the patriarch of the herd, a stately fellow with enormous dewlap and immensely deep shoulders, who was

pawing the ground fretfully, and uttering deep cries, as if impatient for the herd to retire to the depths of the jungle for shelter from the rays of the sun, which were beginning to feel oppressive.

I descended a short distance down the side of the hill, and crept along the brow until I got under the cover of a clump of bamboos, whence I again caught sight of him. Here I had nearly been discovered, for two cows and a young calf sprang up close to me, and rushed, tail on end, towards the rest of the herd, who lifting up their heads seemed to gaze anxiously in my direction. I therefore remained a few moments perfectly quiet, keeping my eye upon the mighty bull who was standing about three hundred yards distant; and when I saw that their alarm had in some degree subsided, I crept gently forward, and, taking advantage of any cover I could find, managed to ensconce myself behind a large rhododendron-bush within a hundred and twenty yards of him.

I then blew a shrill blast on a silver call I always wore round my neck, as a signal to B——, and shortly afterwards heard a double shot, followed by three others. The first report attracted the bull's attention, and he trotted forward a few paces to reconnoitre, tearing up the turf with his hoofs, and lashing his tail, as if indignant that his sylvan retreat should be intruded upon. Whilst in this position he offered me a fair view of his brawny shoulder, and I planted a heavy cylindro-conical bullet just behind it, which brought him to his knees with a

surly roar. Mad with pain, he regained his feet, and staggered forward on three legs, when I gave him the contents of my second barrel in nearly the same place, which rolled him over. Chineah now handed me my other rifle, and I quitted the cover; when no sooner did he catch sight of me than again springing up, with a deep tremulous roar, he charged headlong at me, tail on end, his eyes flashing fire, and mouth covered with blood and foam. I let him come to within six paces of where I was standing, when I stopped his mad career with a ball in the centre of his broad, massive forehead, which again made him bite the dust. He gave a desperate plunge forward, and rolled heavily over on his side, dead. The others, alarmed, were now tearing frantically over the plain, so I slipped behind the cover of a bush to reload, and again stealing forward, managed to bowl over a cow and wound another badly, before the terrified herd sought safety in flight by rallying in a body and crashing through the dense bamboo-jungle which clothed the side of the hill. After reloading, I despatched the second cow with a bullet behind the horns, as she was lying disabled by my first shot, which had passed through the small of her back and paralyzed her hind-quarters.

I now looked out for B—— and Googooloo, who were nowhere to be seen, but a dead cow and a young bull-calf showed that they had not been idle. Whilst I was examining the latter, and cogitating upon veal-cutlets and marrow-bones, I heard two double shots

in the cover just below the crest of the hill, which were immediately followed by a loud whoop from B——; and on running up I found him standing breathless over the carcass of a huge bull, which was evidently just killed.

“By Jove! Hal,” exclaimed he, as I approached, “I’m regularly done up; this brute has led me such a chase. I hit him fairly between the eyes, and doubled him up like a rabbit with buck-shot, for he dropped without a struggle, dead, as I thought, and I paid no more attention to him; but letting drive at the herd as they bolted away, I killed a cow and a calf and wounded a third, when suddenly my friend picked himself up, shook his head savagely, gave an angry grunt, and charged right at me. Every barrel being discharged, I stepped on one side and got out of his way, when he directed his attention to Googooloo, who dodged him amongst the trees easily enough; for, half-blinded with blood from his wound, he reeled and tumbled about as if he was groggy, every now and then falling heavily. As soon as I had reloaded I gave chase, but all at once missed him, and it was only just now that the Yanadi pointed him out to me in this clump of high grass, where he had cunningly lain down to conceal himself. As I came up he again charged, when stepping aside I allowed him to pass, and gave him the contents of both barrels well behind the shoulder, which brought him up, and to make sure of him this time I administered a couple of pills in the back of the head as

he lay writhing and gasping upon the ground; and here he is, safe enough. But what have you done?"

"About the same as yourself," I answered; "I have killed the big bull and a couple of cows, which make six bison and three elk bagged. Not a bad day's work for two guns."

"No, indeed," replied B——; "would it not make the folks at home stare?"

"Mulcher log boht kush hongga, sahib!"—"The Mulcher people will be very happy, sir!" exclaimed Chineah; "there will be meat in their huts for many days to come, and the gentlemen's great shekar will be spoken of for a long time in far-off jungles."

"Yes, Chineah," I replied; "I dare say we shall soon have more mouths to fill, but remember you impress upon the minds of the Coorchi moopen* of the Carders, and the head men of the Mulchers, that in return for the game we give them I shall expect to hear of elephants."

"Ho ba-shuck, sahib!"—"Yes, without doubt, sir, the tribes will build 'jopreys' (huts made of branches) near our camp, and we can send the men into the jungle every day to look out for trails."

"All right," I replied, "that's your affair; in the mean time hand me the tape, and come and help me to measure the other *kulgha* (bull-bison), as I think it is the largest I have ever killed."

So saying we retraced our steps to the big bull,

* A high-priest, or rather "holy man" of a tribe.



Tiger in a cage.

and, with the aid of a straight bamboo, I took the exact dimensions, and entered them in my note-book as follows :—

“ Perpendicular height, from the bottom of the hoof to the top of the shoulder, not following the curve of the body, 6 feet 4 inches ; height to the top of hump, 6 feet 9 inches ; length of body from the tip of nose to insertion of tail, 11 feet 4 inches ; length of tail, 3 feet 4 inches ; girth of body, 9 feet 3 inches ; girth of fore-arm, 2 feet 10 inches ; girth of neck, 4 feet 10 inches ; breadth of forehead, 2 feet 5 inches ; circumference round base of horns, 1 foot 9 inches ; length of horns, 1 foot 4 inches ; colour, black along the back, light dun under the belly and inside the thighs, the legs below the knees and hocks dirty white ; the cows much less in proportion, with hardly any hump or dewlap, the head smaller and more graceful.”

“ Well, Hal,” exclaimed B——, as we finished measuring the gigantic animal ; “ I think there are few finer fellows than this, even in the whole Wynaad Jungle : he is fully two inches higher than any we have hitherto met with, and both you and I have tumbled over a good few in our time too. What a farce to compare the American buffalo with this stately fellow, nineteen hands at the shoulder, and twenty and an inch extreme height ! I wonder what the folks at Smithfield would think of him.”

“ I wish we had the little stock we have bagged this morning, Ned, in that neighbourhood,” I

answered ; “ they would be worth a twelvemonth’s pay and allowances to us, and as a contrast we might also exhibit at the same time a ‘ yak,’ for the smallest as well as the largest of the genus *Bos* are to be found in Hindostan—the bison being over twenty hands and the yak not exceeding nine. But, Ned, we have yet a good trudge before we reach the head of the fall, and I do not think we shall have more than four or five hours’ daylight, so we had better set the people to cut thorns and bamboo-stakes at once to cover the animals, so as to scare away the jackals, and then make the best of our way.”

“ All right,” replied he ; “ we’ll blow a cloud whilst they are at work, for it would be a pity to have the skins spoiled, they would cover us such a famous basket-boat to float down to the coast in, by the Bowani and Cauvery ;” which latter flows into the sea near Tranquebar, passing through the towns of Trichinopoly, Tanjore, and Combaconum *en route*.

After having cut out the tongues, which we generally salted, and packed up a few marrow-bones, we superintended the “ bushing” of the game, and shouldering our rifles again made a start. We followed a course parallel to the crest of the ravine, taking care not to go too close to the edge, as the turf was smooth and slippery, and in some places we might have fallen several thousand feet before reaching the ground.

We now entered a forest of gigantic teak-trees, so dense that the rays of the sun never penetrated, and

the light resembled faint and dubious twilight. None but those who have explored an Indian forest could have any conception of the depth of gloom and strange silence that pervades these solitudes. Emerging from the dense forest-jungle that covered the high ridge along which our course had hitherto lain, we descended through a rocky gorge into a beautiful valley clothed with short, luxuriant, emerald-green grass, through which a softly-murmuring stream of clear pellucid water glided smoothly along until it plunged over a jutting cliff, when, bounding from ledge to ledge, it formed a succession of foaming cataracts, and at last, rushing in its headlong course down the almost perpendicular slope of the mountain, swept over the scarped precipice at the head of the ravine in which we had built our hut.

We made our way to the first fall, and lying flat upon the ground, crawled to the edge of the precipice, and peeping cautiously over, we beheld a scene which amply repaid all our toil. The glowing plain of the low country lay stretched like a map before us, some thousands of feet below, and we could trace the winding course of the Bowani river for some scores of miles as it gleamed in the rays of the sun like a silver thread. To our right rose a grand amphitheatre of frowning heights, every portion of which, save only the scarped face of some perpendicular cliff, was covered with primeval forest, and far off could be discerned the fringed outline of more distant ranges, blue and indistinct in the fading light of departing

day. It was a landscape of transcendent beauty, which has left a vivid impression on my mind; for perhaps the gorgeous sunset, which gilds all Eastern scenery with a beauty peculiarly its own, may have rendered this more charming, by casting those rich golden tints upon the lofty peaks and rugged cliffs which the painter loves to throw over his picture.

The day was fast drawing to a close, and it was time to think of preparing our bivouac for the night, so we selected a rising ground for our encampment under the lee of a huge boulder of moss-covered rock, flanked by two strange-looking trees, whose dark dense foliage, gnarled branches, and tortuous roots, reminded us much of those ancient yews that are so often met with in the country churchyards of old England. This arcadian nook was embellished by natural parterres of orchideous plants, wild camellias, rhododendrons, and other flowering shrubs, whilst here and there were scattered clumps of stately forest-trees, from which hung festoons of the *pusivel creeper* (*Entada pursætha*) with its gigantic pods nearly six feet in length, and other blooming parasites.

Chineah and the people were not long in constructing two huts (one for us and the other for themselves) by sticking bamboos into the ground, bending their tops together, which they fastened with creepers so as to form an arch, and wattling the sides with twigs. A trench was then dug, the earth heaped up all round, and the whole covered with a combley which was well pegged down, making an

impervious shelter. In our tent a carpet was spread over a bed of dry leaves, a rest for our rifles constructed, and a bull's eye lanthorn hung up ready for lighting.

I was accustomed to make myself at home and comfortable when in the jungle, being always very careful in the selection of my sleeping-place, for although, after many long years' campaigning, my constitution has become more hardy and less susceptible of injury from cold and damp, still I have seen so many fine fellows succumb to dysentery and fever, the seeds of which diseases were laid by careless exposure to the night-air, after extreme heat and exhaustion, that I always take care of myself; besides which, it is wretched beyond description to be shivering beneath a scanty covering, and feel the night air cut through one until the life-blood is almost frozen, when a little care and forethought would have prevented it.

The sun had now gone down, and the fast expiring twilight was deepening into night, and barely sufficed to disclose the beauties of the surrounding scenery, so we adjourned to the camp-fire, where all were busily engaged in preparing the evening meal; and the consequent bustle which ensued presented a strange contrast to the dreamy stillness that a few minutes before pervaded this romantic sylvan dell. After a smoke and a chat round the fire, we set the watch and turned in, well satisfied with our day's sport.

CHAPTER XXI.

“Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
From toil to rest, and joy in every change.”

THE GREAT ANAMALAI FOREST—(*continued*).—A ROGUE ELEPHANT.

Naga's party join us.—News of a *rogue* elephant.—Chineah despatched for the bison's spoils.—B——'s luck.—The start.—We strike a fresh trail.—Fall in with the tusker.—Our proceedings.—B——'s excellent shot.—The *ivories*.—A discussion on “rogues.”—The cutting-out of the tusks.—Return to the low country.—Arrival of our guests.—Dinner.—B——'s adventure of a “griffin.”—The lion and tiger compared.—My first lion.—We again ascend the ghaut.—Good cheer.—Consultation.—Elephant spoors.—The trail followed up.—K——'s rashness.—An escape.—A small tusker falls.—Return to the hut.—B——'s bag.—A storm.—Return to cantonment.

SHORTLY after we had retired to rest, I was awakened by an extraordinary noise and bustle outside our hut, and, on calling for Chineah, found that Naga and Veerapah, with a party of Carders, had come in, having missed their way until attracted by our fire. Naga reported that the Carders had told him of a bull-elephant, with large tusks, that had been seen several times lately in a wooded ravine, about two coss (four miles) distant; and which he and Veerapah, under the guidance of the party then in camp, had been to look for him, and whilst they were following up his trail, and talking as they went along,

he made his appearance and charged right at them, but that they had made their escape by climbing into trees, where they remained until he moved away. The Carders also knew of the whereabouts of a herd at no very great distance among the hills; and they reported that bison were to be found at any time in the teak forests. Having made up my mind to go after the solitary tusker, whom I suspected to be a "rogue" that had been driven out of a herd by his companions, from his vicious attack on the people, I turned over and slept until called by Chineah in the morning.

A venison steak broiled on the embers of our fire, a cup of coffee, and a couple of chapaties (girdle-cakes made of rice-flour), formed our breakfast; during which meal I informed B—— of Naga's news, as he had not heard it, being asleep at the time. I then despatched Chineah, Veerapah, and a party of Carders and Mulchers, for the bison's skins and horns, which they were to take down to our hut in the low country, and there remain until our return. As there was only one elephant, according to our usual custom in such cases, we tossed up for the "shot," and B—— won, as he generally managed to do; after which we set out and followed the course of the valley for about a mile, when we entered a beautiful open forest of magnificent teak-trees, where we soon came upon the old spoor of an elephant, which we followed into a patch of high waving bamboo-jungle, that had evidently been his

place of abode for several days, as we could tell by the number of trails we met with on every side, all of which appeared of the same size, and varying from one to ten days old.

Finding, from the freshness of the spoor, that he could not be very far off, I ordered all the party, except Googooloo and Naga, who carried our spare guns, to mount into trees, so as to be out of the way in case we met with him ; and shortly afterwards we came to a sandy watercourse, which he had evidently only just crossed, as the water was still flowing into the imprints of his mighty feet. Whilst examining these marks, Googooloo, whose every muscle quivered with excitement, whilst his expressive countenance was lighted up with intense animation, made a sign for us to listen ; and above that strange, indescribable, low buzzing hum, caused by the insect-world, from the depths of the forest on every side, I plainly heard a low "*urmph*," "*urmph*," which noise I knew was caused by the elephant blowing through his trunk. We now took the spare guns from Naga and Googooloo, which we flung over our shoulders, first taking the precaution of putting on fresh caps, so as to ensure against miss-fires.

Having made signs to our attendants to mount into trees, which was much against their inclinations, as they wanted to see the fun, we crept as noiselessly as possible towards the spot from whence the sound proceeded, and in a little while had the gratification of seeing a very fair-sized tusker rubbing himself

most energetically against the trunk of a large teak-tree. We made a circuit through the wood in order to get well to *leeward* of him, and then, cocking our rifles, cautiously approached, taking advantage of whatever cover we could find from clumps of bamboo and natural undulations of the ground; he seeming so much engrossed in his occupation (that of scratching himself), that he did not perceive our approach, and allowed us to get close behind him, where we stood watching his movements for a few moments. Seeing that B—— was perfectly ready, I gave a shrill whistle, which immediately attracted his attention, for his ears distended, and he swung heavily round, with a hoarse grunt, fully exposing his broad forehead to our view. Quick as thought B—— threw up his rifle, and fired a double shot—a heavy fall, a subdued sigh, followed the report, and when the smoke cleared away I saw he had pitched heavily forward, and buried his tusks nearly a foot deep into the ground. I stepped up to give him a “*coup de grace*,” but it was not required, both bullets had struck the vulnerable place immediately above the trunk, within an inch of each other, and, penetrating the brain, death was instantaneous.

“Hurra!” cried B——, as he threw up his cap, “those ‘*ivories*’ must weigh heavy, and will help to replenish the shot in my locker, for old Framjee will give me a pagoda* a pound for them. Was it not neatly done?”

* A pagoda, three rupees and a half—about seven shillings.

“Yes,” I replied, “most scientifically, for he dropped to your shot like a stone; however, you had better superintend the cutting-out of the tusks yourself, as he has fallen in an awkward position to get at; and, if you do not take care, the fellows will chip the ivory with their axes, which will spoil the appearance of the tusks.”

“All right, Hal, I’ll see to it; but do you think this fellow was really a rogue? for he does not look as if he was particularly vicious, judging from the cut of his ‘phisog,’ although he has several old scars, barely healed, over his hind-quarters.”

“I do, for several reasons,” I replied. “First, because the Carders, who are generally tolerably truthful, say so; secondly, because of his solitary habits; and thirdly, because I fancy those scars are the results of encounters with other of his species, who will not allow him to associate with them. An elephant who has once lost his herd or family is an outcast from the rest of the race, for he is not permitted to join any other troop, although he may frequent the same feeding-places. I fancy that their solitary life causes them to become morose and vicious; for rogues, whether male or female, are always found alone. I think I told you that the old rogue with a broken tusk, that I killed in the Bally-rungum Hills a short time ago, used to attack every animal he came near, and did not fear man in the least, for, whenever he heard the sounds of an axe in the part of the jungle he inhabited, he would rush

shrieking, and chase the woodcutters, who went about their work in fear and trembling until I rolled him over with a single ball as he charged me, when I caught him bathing in a small pool of water."

"I remember it well," answered B——; "but here come the men with the axes, so bear a hand, and we will show them how to begin ourselves."

When the people came up, we set to work cutting out the tusks; which task, even with the aid of heavy axes, a saw, and fresh relays of operators, took us nearly three hours before it was accomplished, when, cutting off the end of the tail and the tips of the ears and trunk to send to the "Cutchery"* for the Government reward, we slung the ivory on bamboos, and the Mulchers carried it on their shoulders.

We descended the ghaut by a shorter route than the one we came by, and arrived at our hut by sunset, where we had the gratification of finding K—— and C—— enjoying a bath in the lake. We joined them, and after a most refreshing dip, sat down to a famous dinner, in which my *chef de cuisine*, "Five Minutes," outvied all his previous performances by indulging us in a most delicious pie made of the bison's marrow. After due justice had been done to the good cheer, and we had received the hearty congratulations of our guests on our shooting achievements, we adjourned outside the hut, to indulge in the "fragrant weed" and the cup that cheers but does not inebriate, and B—— much amused us by

* Cutchery—the collector's office.

relating an account of Paddy Lynch's first rencontre with "wild bastes." Paddy landed as a cadet at Madras, and was very shortly afterwards despatched to join a party of "griffins" at Poonamallee, who were going up-country to join their respective regiments. Pat sent on his traps the day before, and early the next morning commenced his march, accompanied by his horsekeeper, who had a smattering of English. He had heard of bears and tigers up-country, so he went fully armed and equipped. After he had got a few miles from Madras, he came to a tank, in which he saw two strange black-looking creatures swimming about, that he took to be alligators or hippopotami (he was not sure which). He immediately dismounted, drew his shot, and, loading with ball, stole as gingerly as he could towards his game, which to his surprise allowed him to approach tolerably near, when they snorted in his face. Pat taking a fair aim at the head of the first, let drive, and immediately the animal sank; he then blazed away at the other, and wounded it so severely that it began spinning round in the water. He loaded again, and after some more discharges, he "cooked its goose," and was in great glee at having killed his first "*large game*." He, however, forbore going into the tank to fetch them out, as he said "he felt a bit scared-like for fear there might be any more o' the cratur's at the bottom of the wather," so he called upon some villagers to help him. When he had pointed out his game, to his great surprise they

began a series of vociferations and lamentations, beating their breasts, and howling in a most frantic manner. "By the Powers!" says Pat, "sure it's one of their sacred alligators I've been shooting!" So, mounting his horse, he set off at full speed to Poona-mallee, where he arrived just as they were sitting down to breakfast. He immediately told his adventure. The griffins listened with wonder, but a cloud passed over the face of the officer in charge, who turning round in a very grave manner to Pat, said: "Mr. Lynch, I am afraid you have killed a brace of niggers, and got yourself into a mess." Pat declared he had not, but remained very glum all the rest of the time at breakfast, when suddenly a row was heard outside. Pat recognised his horsekeeper's voice, flew out of the door, and in a moment returned shouting, "Sure, Captain, they arn't niggers at all, but just a fine brace of sea-cows I've bagged, for they're being brought in slung on poles." Need I say that Pat had killed a couple of tame buffaloes, as they were swimming in the tank with their noses just above water, and he only got out of his mess by the prompt payment of some forty rupees, and a good "wiggling" from the commanding officer of the station.

After B——'s story, which was deservedly much applauded, whilst we were discussing brandy-panee and cheroots, and talking over the events of the day, B—— and K—— had a lively discussion regarding the relative size and strength of the lion and the tiger, and, as I had had some experience with both,

the question was referred to me. I gave it as my opinion that the tiger was the larger and more powerful of the two, but that the lion, generally speaking, showed the most pluck.

“That is just what I have been contending, Hal,” exclaimed B——; “but give us a Cape yarn to pass away the time, and afterwards we will have a song or two, and turn in, so as to be up betimes in the morning.”

“All right,” I replied, wetting my whistle, “I’ll give you an account of my first lion. I was rusticated at Natal, with an old chum who had given up the service to turn settler, a little way up-country, and was about to convert his sword into a pruning-hook, when one day, as we were sitting under a mat awning in front of the house, smoking our manillas after breakfast, a Dutch pedlar, of the name of Vanderhalt (a well-known character in that colony), came up and informed us that he had seen a herd of spring-buck in the Berere, a large belt of jungle some few miles distant. S——, who was also very fond of sport, gave him some tea and a bundle of cheroots, provided he would accompany us and show us their trail, and mounting our nags we set out with our guns and rifles, and, after a ride of five hours, came upon the slots of the herd. These animals, which take their name from the amazing springs they make over bushes, or any obstruction that lies in their path, are rather less than the common deer and about the same colour, with a white stripe on

each side, and a black stripe or mane along the back, which they have the power of closing or expanding. They are sometimes caught with greyhounds, but it takes a good dog to run them down. Confident in their fleetness, it is very amusing to see the contemptuous way in which they treat their pursuers; as they allow them to come near, and then, giving a bound and a snort, expand the hair on their backs, and change colour, appearing white. 'They are extremely graceful creatures, jumping beautifully, with the head thrown back, the legs doubled quite under, and the body curved, so that they appear for the moment as if suspended in the air.

"We were all, the Dutchman included, well mounted on beautiful Cape horses belonging to S——, and accompanied by a native servant, who had followed his master's fortunes over the 'Kala Panee' (Black Waters), and a Hottentot boy of the name of Hans Kleine (John the Lesser), who was quite a *lusus naturæ*, for—

"His back went in, and his belly stuck out,
And his lips resembled a grunter's snout.'

But he rode well, and carried a goat's skin full of water, some grog, and a couple of bottles of cognac. S—— was armed with a double fowling-piece; the Dutchman with a huge antediluvian single rifle, nearly six feet in length, called a 'roër;' and I had my pet double rifle (ten-gauge), loaded with Jacobs' cylindro-conical balls, and a smooth-bore of the same calibre, besides pistols in my holsters. We followed

the trail for some time, passing through a series of grassy plains, separated from each other by copses of the delicate-leaved mimosa, covered with golden-yellow blossoms, which emitted a delightful perfume, until we came to a river, the banks of which were covered with reeds, twenty yards in breadth; and as the stream was low, there having been a drought for some time, we managed to find a ford, the water coming up to our saddle-girths. When we arrived at the other side, we perceived from the slots that the herd had scattered over the plain, as if they had been suddenly alarmed; and, on closer investigation, we found the pugs of two full-grown lions and a pair of half-grown cubs, which fully accounted for the panic that had taken place. It was evident that these animals had been lurking in a mimosa grove, by the side of the river, and lying in wait for their prey as they came to drink; and, from the freshness of the pugs, I felt sure they could not be far off, so I followed their spoor for about a mile over the plain (which was hard, firm, and good riding-ground), until I came to a low cone-shaped hill, which I ascended, to get a better survey of the surrounding country. I was sweeping the horizon with my field-glass, which was not of much use, on account of a mirage that obstructed the view, and made all distant objects look dim, when 'Kleine,' the Hottentot boy, tapping me on the shoulder, pointed out a flock of vultures that were circling in the air at some short

distance, saying, '*Dar ist der verdamt tau!*'-- (There is the cursed lion!) I turned my glass to the spot, without distinguishing anything, but on cantering ahead, I soon had the gratification of seeing a full-grown lion and lioness, with two half-grown cubs, feasting on the remains of two spring-bucks. I looked to my nipples, to see the powder was well up, and rode towards them; but my horse did not at all like the sport, and became so extremely violent and restive, from fear, as to be almost unmanageable, and finding that I should have had no chance of firing from the saddle with any precision, I had to return to S——, who, with the Dutchman and servants, had pulled up, on observing the lions, which were game none of them seemed inclined to attack, for although S—— was a fearless hunter, he had been suffering from an inflammation and weakness of the eyes, caused by the excessive glare of the sun reflected from the sand, and his sight was so much affected that he could no longer depend upon his aim as in days of yore. I therefore dismounted, and prepared to open the campaign on my own hook—trusting to a steady hand and good weapons to see me safely through it. On my retreat, on account of the restiveness of my horse, the lion had advanced nearly two hundred yards from the spot where the dead spring-bucks lay, leaving the lioness and cubs still feeding, and he was now coolly surveying our party, stretched out at full-length on the grass, with his paws out before him, and yawning listlessly, about

four hundred yards distant. On perceiving me advancing towards him, he made a long, low moaning noise, like thunder rumbling among distant hills, by which he thought perhaps to intimidate me; but, finding it had not the desired effect, he got up and sat on his haunches like a dog, making curious whining noises, and turning his head every now and again to look at his mate and cubs, who, understanding from his growling, which was becoming more and more savage, that something was up, withdrew to some low sand-hills, a short distance away, which I was rather thankful for. When I got to about two hundred and fifty yards distant, I stopped to unsling my second gun from my shoulder, so as to be ready; on which my friend sprang to his feet, and made three or four huge bounds towards me, lashing his tail from side to side, showing his teeth, and giving a tremendous roar, which seemed to shake the earth, and caused the horse I had been riding to break from the grasp of the Hottentot, who was holding it, and scour over the plain. On seeing me advance, he again stopped, and, crouching low on his belly, growled in a most savage manner. I felt that "the die was cast," and there was no retreating; it was a regular duel between man and beast, and was beginning to be rather serious work, for we were barely sixty yards asunder. The lion still lay with his head couched between his paws, although every now and then he appeared to rise, and tear up the earth with his hind claws. His eye-balls glistened

with rage, his mane stood erect, his tail lashed his flanks, and I felt he was watching my every movement, and that further delay was dangerous. I therefore quietly cocked my second gun, laid it by my side on the ground, and then gave a loud shout, at the same time flinging my pith hunting-cap towards him. This had the desired effect; he sprang upon his feet, and at this moment looked grand beyond conception. Now was the moment: I threw up my rifle, took deliberate aim at his broad and massive breast, and let fly. I heard the soft "thud" of the ball as it entered his chest, saw him spring high into the air, and fall upon his back. I rushed up to give him a *coup de grace*, but it was not needed; a convulsive tremor passed over his sturdy limbs, blood gushed from his nose and mouth, the under-jaw dropped, and my first lion was dead. He was a noble animal, measuring over eleven feet from the tip of his nose to the end of the tail. The lioness and cubs, on hearing the shot, made for a small copse about a mile distant; and, as it was too late in the day to pursue them, after S—— had caught my horse we skinned the lion, cut off his head as a trophy, packed them behind Kleine's saddle, and made the best of our way back home, where we arrived late in the evening."

After my yarn, songs passed round until a late hour, and as my old hunting-chants had begun to be very stale from frequent repetition, and new ones were not obtainable, I extemporized the following words, and sang them when my turn came round:

THE OLD SONG.

“There’s something in the well-known tone
Of ancient ballad lays,
That calls to mind, though years have flown,
The friends of early days.
I’ve seen them cause the tears to start,
From sternest soldier’s eye ;
No modern strains could touch his heart
Like those of days gone by.

CHORUS.

Then sing to me the songs of yore !
For, though they make me sigh,
They bring to mind dear friends once more,
And happy days gone by.

“I love to hear the ancient lays
My mother used to sing ;
They tell me of my childhood’s days,
And fond thoughts backwards bring.
I dream of days of hope and joy,
Whene’er I hear that strain ;
I think that I am still a boy,
And hear her voice again.

CHORUS.

Then sing to me the songs of yore !
For, though they make me sigh,
They bring to mind dear friends once more,
And happy days gone by.”

The echoes of the wood were several times awakened by our rattling choruses, which reverberated in a most strange manner against the face of the cliff overhanging our retreat, and the moon was high in the heavens before we turned in for the night.

We slept long and soundly, as hunters generally do after a hard day’s fag, but as soon as the grey light of dawn appeared, the stirring strains of K——’s bugle rang through the valley, and, obeying

its cheerful summons, we hastily arrayed ourselves in our hunting-gear, assembled round the fire, and partook of a hurried collation previous to ascending the ghaut. The coolies accompanied us with supplies, as it was our intention to remain for a day or two at my former bivouac at the head of the fall, in the hopes of falling in with the herd of elephants reported to have been seen by the Carders some days previously. We entered the jungle as day was breaking, and, after a tedious ascent, arrived at the head of the fall about noon, where we immediately commenced building a commodious hut, as our former one was too small. As soon as our arrangements were completed, B—— and I started on a pot-hunting expedition, K—— and C—— being too much done-up to accompany us, and, after half an hour's beating, managed to bag a couple of jungle-fowl and five hares, which latter were very much larger than those found in the low country. On our return to the hut with our game, we found such a feast awaiting us that we hardly knew what to commence with. An immense round of Dawson's celebrated spiced beef was backed up by a Yorkshire ham, a roast squeaker, and a marrow pie; besides which, cakes smoking hot from the oven, pilau, curry, and piles of wild raspberries and strawberries, garnished the board. Having done ample justice to our good cheer, we withdrew to the watch-fire, where all our people were assembled, and, after distributing the usual allowance of tobacco and grog to every

man in camp, we held a consultation, in which it was determined that we should divide into two reconnoitring parties on the morrow; B—— and C—— with Chineah and four of the gang forming one, and K——, myself, with Googooloo and three others, the second. This settled, we retired to the hut, and, after a rubber of whist, turned in.

We were up long before the sun the next morning, and, after a hearty breakfast, started at a good pace towards the spot where the Carders had fallen in with the elephants. After half an hour's tramp, we came across an old trail, which B——'s party followed up, whilst mine continued our route through beautiful open teak-jungle, carpeted with green turf, most deliciously soft and elastic under foot.

There were plenty of bison-tracks everywhere to be seen, some of which were quite fresh; and Googooloo pointed out to K—— a tuft of herbage that had been very recently torn up by one of those animals, as saliva was still remaining on it. We followed up the trail for a short distance, in the hopes of obtaining a shot, but could not get a glimpse of them. Towards noon we fell in with the spoor of an elephant, that appeared to be about twenty-four hours old, and we continued to track it up until late in the afternoon, when, my companion giving evident signs of fatigue, we made preparations for passing the night, by building a couple of huts close to a small rivulet, which looked clear and sparkling as a trout-stream in Scotland. It was a beautiful spot for a camp,

as on all sides rose hills covered with dense deep-green forest, intersected with innumerable mountain-streams, which emerged from the trees and glistened like silver threads in the light of the setting sun.

Our day's fag told upon us; for within half an hour after our dinner we were all coiled up in our blankets fast asleep, and did not stir until Googooloo informed us that dawn was breaking, when, giving ourselves a shake, we adjourned to the brook to perform our ablutions whilst breakfast was preparing. This finished, we again started on trail; and, as we were following up the spoor of the day before, I found unmistakable signs that a herd of elephants had passed by within a very short time. We immediately followed up at our best pace, and in a couple of hours fell in with the rear guard, consisting of three females, which I had some difficulty in preventing my companion from firing at, as they were the first wild elephants he had ever seen. I never cared to pull trigger at the "gentler sex," and, as the herd appeared to number about eleven, I concluded there must be a bull amongst them. I told K—— to wait under cover as quietly as possible, whilst I went forward to reconnoitre; but I had hardly left the spot, when I heard a double shot, followed by a scream of rage, and, turning back, to my horror I saw my companion running for his life through the jungle, with a tusker closely following him, tail on end. The elephant, notwithstanding his apparently unwieldy shape, gets over the ground much faster than one would suppose,

and poor K—— would have had no chance if he had not been able to dodge him, by running round trees. I could not for the moment get a fair shot at any vulnerable part; but, seeing that the elephant had got so near that he could almost have reached him with his trunk, I let drive a double shot at his ear, and brought him to his knees, which gave K—— time to clamber up into a tree. It was a very near touch, for he was breathless, and another few seconds would have seen him trampled under foot; as it was, I was able to despatch the tusker with my second gun, which Googooloo handed to me just as he began to recover himself, and was getting on his knees. K—— told me that the moment I left him he heard a slight rustling in the cover close to where we were standing, and almost immediately the tusker made his appearance, coming directly towards him, when he fired a couple of hurried shots, and took to his heels, seeing that he did not drop. I fancy that he must have lost his presence of mind when he saw the huge brute advancing towards him; as only one of his shots had taken effect, and that high up in the forehead. I congratulated him upon his escape, which was certainly due more to good luck than good management, as in the position I was in, and the distance, it must have been entirely a chance shot of mine that dropped him. The sound of our guns caused a great panic in the herd; and they rushed about crashing through the jungle at a great pace, which led me to suppose that they would not pull up until they had covered a

good deal of ground; and as K—— found he had sprained his ankle in his flight, which prevented him from walking comfortably, we gave up all thoughts of further pursuit. Leaving two of our people to cut out the tusks, which were small, not exceeding thirty pounds in weight, we made the best of our way back to the hut, where we found B——'s party busily occupied in preserving the skins of two bison, which they had killed the day previous.

During the afternoon, heavy banks of dark clouds arose, which I knew prognosticated a storm; so we strengthened our hut, and spread extra combleys on the weather-side, so as to make it impervious to the weather. Hardly were our preparations completed, when the sky became uniformly black and gleamless, except when illuminated at intervals by the flashes of bluish-white lightning, and the thunder, reverberating among the mountains like the rolling of distant artillery, now came nearer and nearer, until it seemed to peal directly over head, whilst the rain, in a perfect deluge, poured down upon the hot earth with that peculiar hissing sound heard only in the tropical climates. Later in the evening, the storm passed over, and the night became bitterly cold, dense vapours rising from the ground, which could not be otherwise than unhealthy; so it was determined to commence a retrograde movement. We accordingly started early the next morning for our hut in the valley below, packed up our traps, and halted for the night at the public bungalow near the village of Annamullay. The

next day we pushed on to Coimbatore, where we remained a couple of days, as B—— was suffering from diarrhoea, and then returned to my domicile at Ootacamund.

Here we were both taken with the worst description of jungle-fever, and for several days I was hanging between life and death, being quite given up by the medical officers. B—— was also in a bad way, and seven of our people, including three of the gang, Naga, Veerapah, and Ramasawmy, fell victims to this almost incurable disease within a week of our return to the hills.

B—— was scarcely convalescent, when he received a summons from his uncle, Sir William B——, the Puisne judge of Madras, and had to set off for the Presidency by forced marches. *En route* he was again attacked by fever, and so prostrated as to be unable to mount his horse, having to continue his journey in a common country bullock-cart. At the end of one of the stages between Trichinopoly and Madras he was found dead in the cart, having passed away alone and untended. This was the end of one of the most promising sportsmen that India has produced, and his loss was felt far and wide, for his inestimable qualities and good-fellowship had endeared him to every one who knew him. Poor B——, he was—

“The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best conditioned and unwearied spirit
For doing courtesies; and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears,
Than any that draws breath.”

SECTION IV.—THE HIMALAYAS.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ To sit on rocks, to muse o’er flood and fell,
 To slowly trace the forest’s shady scene,
 Where things that own not man’s dominion dwell,
 And mortal feet have ne’er or rarely been ;
 To climb the trackless mountain all unseen
 With the wild flock that never needs a fold,
 Alone o’er steeps and foaming falls to lean :
 This is not solitude ; ’tis but to hold
 Converse with Nature’s charms, and view her stores unroll’d.”

THE TERAÍ AND THE DEHRA DOON.

The Himalayas.—The nature of the forest, and the variety of game to be found at each elevation.—The great natural resources of the district.—**Kheeree.**—My first rencontre with Doctor S——.—The programme.—**The Dehra Doon.**—Glorious scenery.—Dehra and my reception.—Fred. G——.—The preparation.—Our armament.—The start.—**Kalunga.**—**Than.**—News of game.—We strike the trail of a tiger.—My shekarries’ superiority in tracking.—The spoiler disturbed at his dinner.—Our proceedings.—The kakur, or barking-deer.—The Doctor’s doings.—A wounded tiger’s trail followed up.—Unexpected rencontre.—The issue.—The spoilers spoiled.—Forest harmony.—The return to Than.

To the north of Hindostan, between Kashmere and Cahar, stretching from the Indus on the north-west, to Brahmaputra on the south-east, and dividing the plains of India from the steppes of Thibet and Tartary, is the mighty Himalaya, called by the Tartars “ the Country of Snow” (Heemachul). This great natural

barrier is a scarcely-known mountainous district, about fourteen hundred miles in length, by from seventy to a hundred and twenty in breadth, consisting of a succession of snowy ranges rising one behind another, unassailable to man except in those places where the beds of the rivers intersect it and afford him access to its wild fastnesses.

Every variety of temperature from tropical heat to the cold of the Arctic regions is to be found in the Himalaya; and as the nature of the forest changes with the climate, the variety of game the sportsman meets with in this district is something extraordinary.

A dense belt of forest from ten to twenty miles in width, usually called "The Terai," skirts the base of the mountains, and thickly-wooded spurs jutting far out into the plain, form hot, damp, swampy valleys, covered with long grasses, that at certain times of the year are almost impassable for Europeans on account of the pernicious exhalations and fatal malaria there engendered, which bring on the most deadly of jungle fevers. These virgin primeval forests, which in many parts have never been explored, consist chiefly of sal, send, sessum (valuable timber), kuldoo, cheer (Scotch pine), bamboo, the leguminosæ, pothos, and elephant creepers, tree-ferns, wild banana, vines, ferns, high grasses, parasitical orchids, and convolvuli of several varieties; and are the home of herds of elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, panthers, leopards, cheetas, black bears, hyenas, lynxes, boars, jackals, foxes, wild dogs, tiger cats, sambur, spotted deer, muntjak, dodur, or

four-horned deer, hog deer, pea fowl, jungle fowl, kaleege, or silver pheasant, spur fowl, black and grey partridge, checkore, bustard, flonkin, or lesser bustard, quail, and hares.

This tropical belt ceases at from four to five thousand feet, and the forest begins to wear quite a changed aspect, the trees being of a different character ; for from this elevation to about eight or nine thousand feet, we have beautiful woods of oak of three kinds (the banj, the khurso, and the moura, all ever-green), walnut, chestnut, sycamore, horse-chestnut, maple, rye and morenda pines, alder, holly, cedar, cypress, ash, poplar, yew, apple, quince, peach, apricot, cherry, filbert, bramble, red and black currant, raspberry, strawberry ; with groves of box, laurel, myrtle, white and purple magnolia, camellia, rhododendrons with blossoms of every shade from white and bright yellow to dark purple ; fuchsias, geraniums, woodbine, honeysuckles, peppers, dog-rose, ivy, violets, primroses, anemone, cowslips, and mosses and lichens, as in England. Here, in addition to many of the animals of the tropical belt, we find several species never to be met with in the plains, viz., the brown and yellow bear, the yellow solitary wolf, the gooral, or Himalayan chamois, the jerow, or hill stag, the tehr, or wild sheep, the surrow, or goat antelope, the eagle, the moonal, or blue pheasant, the koklas, or mottled pheasant, the peura, or hill partridge, the Himalayan grouse, the woodcock, thrush, blackbird, cuckoo, goldfinch, chaffinch, mountain sparrow, flying

squirrel, otter, marten, pine cat, lungoor, or black-faced grey-bearded monkey, black hill monkey, boa, and gigantic damian, or rock-snake.

At an elevation of about nine thousand feet we get to a third zone, and with the exception of a few cedars, khursoo oaks, and stunted pines, no trees are to be seen but the white birch, dwarf rhododendron, a kind of willow, and three varieties of juniper. Here we find a third class of animals, viz., the kustooree, or musk-deer, the markhor, or serpent-eater (a kind of wild goat), the ibex, the black-eared fox, the cheer, or brown pheasant, and the argus, or horned pheasant.

At from twelve to thirteen thousand feet the limit of the forest generally ceases (although in some more sheltered places I have found it at over sixteen thousand feet, or about the height of the summit of Mont Blanc), and is succeeded by a fourth zone of grassy pastures, which rise to the snow line. Here in the summer the turf is enamelled with myriads of lovely flowers and aromatic herbs, which are nourished by the melting of the snows, and this is the habitat of the burrul, or snow sheep, the nyau (*Ovis ammon*), or gigantic snow sheep, the sna and sha, varieties of wild sheep (*Ovis montana*), the bonchour, or wild yak, the kyang, or wild horse, and the marmot.

Above the snow line, the elevation of which varies considerably, is found a fifth class of animals, viz., the snow-bear, the snow-leopard, the white wolf, the white fox, the white hare, the lammergier, the kungul, or

snow-pheasant, and the Burf ke teetur, or snow-partridge.

The above will show the general nature of the forest at the different altitudes, and the usual habitat of each animal; but the elevation of the line of demarcation varies in different parts, as some places are more or less exposed than others, and some animals change their place of abode to a higher or lower temperature according to the season of the year, or as they may find food and pasturage.

Here man may have all he can wish for that is to be met with in this sublunary existence. If he is a lover of nature's grandest works, what scenery can be likened to the unbroken range of perpetual snow in the Himalaya, the father of mountains, beside which the highest peak of the Alps would appear an insignificant spur? Is he a botanist? Here is such a glorious field open to his research, that it appears as if nature had collected and garnered all her most varied and choicest productions in one spot, so exuberantly luxurious is the vegetation. Is he a naturalist, a collector, or simply a lover and observer of the character and habits of the different *feræ naturæ*? This district affords a greater variety of animals than any other in the known world. Is he a geologist? In the ravines and deep chasms that intersect this region violent convulsions of nature have laid bare the most hidden strata of the earth. Is he an astronomer? What earthly observatory can be compared to these mountains for watching the heavenly bodies, on

which the pure translucent atmosphere has the effect of magnifying every star, revealing constellations that are invisible from the plain? Is he fond of wild adventure and enterprise? Here are unexplored regions where man has never trod. Is he ambitious of gaining wealth? Gold is mingled with the sand of many of the rivers, valuable metals and gems have been found in the mountains, and the immense resources of the forest only require to be developed to produce incalculable riches. Is he a lover of the comfortable? Here he may change his climate at his pleasure, and choose the temperature that best suits his constitution; whilst the contents of his larder may be as varied as if he had at command the produce of many lands. Lastly, is he a sportsman? If so, he need wander no further. Here are the happy hunting-grounds of earth, such as the Red Indian believes will be his paradise hereafter, when the voice of the Great Spirit Wahcondah calls him to his presence. Such is the Himalaya. *Zeada ch'?* (What more can be added?)

About eight o'clock one gloriously cool morning in the end of January, I was sitting performing my toilette at the door of my palanquin, which my bearers had laid down in the veranda of the travellers' bungalow at Kheeree, after having travelled through the night and the greater part of the previous day *en route* from Meerut to Mussoorie, when I heard the monotonous song of a second set of bearers in the distance. *Selon la règle Indienne*, the first comer is

always the host, so I ordered my head bearer to kill a *table* (or fatted) sheep, and prepare a *burra bazree* (big breakfast), whilst I strolled down to the gate to meet the new comer. It proved to be Dr. S——, a regimental surgeon, who after twenty years' active service with his regiment in different parts of India, had obtained a year's leave of absence in order to recruit his health, or rather, as he said, "to exhale some of the superfluous caloric he had imbibed during that period." Although previously unacquainted, we soon became friends, and, as our tastes appeared to assimilate, before breakfast was finished it was decided that he should join me in my shooting and exploring trips among the mountains. He proved to be an excellent companion, and very well informed upon most matters, being perfectly acquainted with the use of barometers and other instruments for ascertaining altitudes, which at a future day proved very useful. At Dehra I was to meet an old school chum, from whom I had last parted on board one of Green's Indiamen at Gravesend more than a dozen years before, when he was for the first time about to join his regiment, in which he was now a captain. Never was there a stauncher friend, a merrier companion, or a better fellow than this said Fred G——, and here, after such a lapse of time, we were about to meet, thousands of miles away from home. He was to be our guide, as he knew the country about Mussoorie well, having hunted all over it with Colonel M——, the late gallant old commandant of H.M.'s 32nd Foot,

who, alas for his friends! has now gone "to that bourne from whence no traveller returns."

Three is, in many respects, the best number for a shooting party, as it not only allows all the members to participate in any conversation that may take place, but in case of argument or indecision of action, gives a majority; besides, three cots can be stowed very comfortably in a hill tent, but not four: three can, in most cases, hunt well together; and lastly, three well-armed Europeans, with their attendants, form a little army in themselves, and in case of need, can hold their own against any marauding attempts by predatory hill tribes.

Towards three in the afternoon we again got into our palanquins, and made a start for the Dehra Doon, which we entered by the Kheeree or Lal Durwaza (red door) pass through the Sewalik hills, a densely-wooded range about three thousand feet in height, and from eight to ten miles across. The far-famed valley of the Doon is about forty miles in length by sixteen in breadth, and is bounded on the north by the Mussoorie or Landour hills, on the east by the Ganges, on the west by the Jumna, and the south by the Sewalik range, through which there are five passes. *En route*, we passed some extremely promising jungle and swampy grass jheels, round which we found innumerable signs of game. Twice the bearers stopped to point us out the pugs of a tiger which had crossed the road only a short time before, and several times we heard deer skirl through the

underwood, disturbed by the noise made by our party, but we had no time to stay on the way to look after them.

As the sun was going down, the western horizon became tinged with the most glorious hues, and we got out of our palanquins and walked for some time in order to admire the extreme beauty of the scenery. The long, unbroken line of snow-clad mountains, everywhere crowned with a continuous ridge of dome-like summits, and at intervals by strange fantastic peaks of every shape, seemed to rise like a mighty wall of alabaster from out of that sea of forest; and the unearthly contrast of the dark foreground with the dazzling white masses of snow and the deep blue azure sky was heightened by the flood of light of declining day, gilding all the western faces with the most indescribably brilliant colours. These shades, like dissolving views, changed imperceptibly from gold to orange, ruby, purple, and blue, which latter shade gradually paled to a death-like whiteness, as the last rays of the sun disappeared, when all soon became obscured by rising mists. The evening was very chilly, so I wrapped myself up in my buffalo blanket and slept until about eleven, when the increased vociferations of the bearers awoke me, and I knew that we were near the end of the journey. I drew aside the palanquin doors, and found we had arrived in Dehra, and were passing along a lane with green hedges on each side, which recalled to mind similar scenes in the "auld countrie."

Shortly afterwards, Chineah and Googooloo made their appearance (they having left Meerut some days before me with the rest of the servants, nags, dogs, and baggage), and under their guidance we turned into a drive leading up to a bungalow. Lights were blazing from the windows, and we were evidently expected, for a long stream of mellow light burst out from a door suddenly opened, and a tall figure, clearly defined against the bright background, was seen advancing from the threshold. A moment more, and I heard a voice I well recognised exclaim, "Hurra, lads, he's here at last!" and before the palanquin stopped, my hand was grasped by an old friend, and right heartily were we both made welcome. He led us through a small vestibule, adorned with sundry grim-looking heads, tusks, antlers, and such-like trophies of the chase, into a cosy-looking sitting-room, where we found two of his pals he had asked to meet us, sitting by the most cheerful-looking of log fires, to whom we were introduced. Supper was served almost immediately, to which we did ample justice, and afterwards luxuriated in the narcotic weed, lubricated by modicums from a steaming bowl, the ambrosial fragrance of which was most grateful to our olfactories after the journey. Fred and I found plenty to talk about, recalling old scenes to mind, and asking and receiving tidings of many an ancient friend. He seemed very little changed, although he had weathered many a frown of fortune, and seen his

full share of active service, since we parted, and was still the same generous, open-hearted, careless dare-all, such as I had ever known him. Before we retired to roost that night, it was settled that we should commence operations with a fortnight's hunting in the Doon, to be followed by an excursion to Gangootree, the source of the Ganges, and to Jumnautri, the source of the Jumna, after which we were to cross the Nilung pass into the valley of the Sutlej, and finish off with an expedition to Cashmere. The next day was to be devoted to preparation, and on the second we were to make a start. In the morning after breakfast my baggage was unpacked, the battery and ammunition overhauled, and four additional hands engaged, as, on account of the immensely long march before me, I had only kept four of my Madras servants, viz., my head boy, cook, and two best shekarries. I had also disposed of my stud, and had now only two hill ponies which I bought at Meerut from an officer who was going to England on sick certificate; but I had kept my three best dogs. The battery with which I intended to take the field consisted of two double eight-gauge smooth bores by Westley Richards, two double ten-gauge rifles by Purday, and two sixteen-gauge fowling-pieces, one an old long Joe Manton, and the other a Purday. Fred had as pretty a set of guns for Indian shooting as I ever saw, consisting of a pair of rifles and a pair of smooth bores, all ten-gauge and exquisitely finished, by Joseph Lang of the Haymarket. The

Doctor had a pair of guns by Boss, and a very long, heavy pea rifle. In accordance with Fred's advice, the Doctor and I each ordered to be made three waterproof "kiltas," in anticipation of our trip to the mountains. These are long pottle-shaped baskets, lined with painted canvas within and leather without, having one side made flat to fit the back, against which it is fastened by straps, this being the ordinary mode the hill coolies carry supplies. In the afternoon we visited a very decent hotel, rode round the racecourse, and saw what was to be seen of the town; after which we dined and retired early to rest, in order to be up betimes.

It was still dark when we all assembled on the following morning, but early as it was, we found a glorious log fire on the hearth, and a substantial breakfast laid out, to which we fell-to like men who had their day's work before them. Our horses were then brought round, and mounting, we took the eastern road leading to the ruins of the hill fort of Kalunga, at the taking of which the gallant Gillespie, with Captain O'Hara, his aide-de-camp, were killed. They and several other officers who fell are buried on a low hill at Mala Pani, where a monument has been raised to their memory. Here we branched off in a southerly direction, and towards noon arrived at our tent, which was pitched near the village of Than, where Fred's shekarries met us with the intelligence that a herd of elephants had been seen three days before by some woodcutters near a river two

cross distant. We dismounted from our horses, and after some refreshment, started off on foot towards the quarter where the game was said to be. For a short time we fell in with the indicated stream, which was one of the tributary branches of the river Tousee, and as we went along, the signs of game, chiefly sambur, spotted deer, and hog, became extremely numerous. At length we fell upon the pugs of a tiger, that appeared so fresh that we determined to follow them up. Here the superior tracking of Googooloo and Chineah put Fred out of conceit with the powers of his own people, as, when they were quite at a nonplus, my men, without the slightest hesitation, pointed out the trail. After about an hour's tracking, we came to a patch of corrinda bush, and whilst we were making our way through it, a low growling noise was heard, and we suddenly came upon the carcass of a spotted doe, evidently killed very lately, and from which our approach had most likely scared the tiger.

Having reconnoitred the place, and made sure that he was not in the immediate neighbourhood, it was resolved that one of us should watch the carcass in case he might return, whilst the other two went further on, to look for elephant spoor. We tossed up to see who should remain, and the doctor won the toss; so we set to work and built him a kind of raised platform amid the branches of a tree within easy range, into which he mounted with one of Fred's people, whilst we continued our route down the stream. Nothing could exceed the beauty of the

river, that formed a succession of very black and deep pools, connected with each other by foaming currents, in which now and again we saw large fish leap, which Fred declared were mahseer. The banks were fringed with clumps of overhanging bamboos, and every turn presented a view which was worthy of a halt to enjoy. Clusters of forest trees in all their primeval majesty were laced and bound together by an infinity of wild vines, forming immense bowers, which would have been no unsuitable abode for Bacchus and his train; whilst the gigantic elephant creeper hung in festoons like cables from trunks upwards of a hundred feet in height, or lay twisted in snake-like coils upon the ground. As we were sauntering quietly along the river, I heard a rustling in a patch of low bush covered with convolvuli and other parasitical plants, and almost immediately I saw something brown moving quickly through the bushes. Without knowing what it was, for it was getting along very quickly, I threw up my rifle and fired a snap-shot, which evidently took effect, for there was a violent struggling in the underwood, and running up I found a barking deer shot through the loins, but still trying to drag itself through the bushes, although the hind legs were paralyzed, to which Chineah gave a *coup de grace* with his knife. The kakur, or barking deer, is the smallest of the mountain deer, not being more than two feet three inches at the shoulder, and about four in length. The general colour is a brownish red, some parts of the

head and flanks approaching to yellow, and under the belly and inside the thighs tawny white. The head is a dusky grey, darkening to black towards the muzzle, and furnished with horns about nine inches long, having one spur, and inclining inwards towards the points, covered with hair for about four inches from their base. It has also two canine teeth about an inch in length, that serve it in digging up the roots and mosses on which it feeds. This little animal, which is generally found in pairs, has a most extraordinary bark, similar to that of a large dog, a single note being uttered at short intervals. Before I became accustomed to its sound, when I heard it in the forest I have often supposed it came from the dog of some other hunter; for the dhole, or wild dog, does not bark, but howls and yelps more like a jackal, whereas the kakur emits a deep hoarse bark like that of an English mastiff. The flesh, although rather dry, is very good eating, especially when stewed gently in port wine.

Having broken up the venison, and rested for a short time, we struck into a grassy swamp, where we came across several old koj, as the Doon shekarries call the spoor of the elephant, but could not find any fresh trail; and we were hunting about when Chineah suddenly exclaimed, "Soono, sahib, bagh gholee khata hy, wo bundook ke awaz tha!" ("Listen, sir! the tiger has eaten bullets; that was the noise of a gun,") and whilst he spoke I heard a second report. We immediately turned back to see what the Doctor had done,

and in a short time got to the spot, where we found the carcass, but neither he nor Fred's shekarry were to be seen. After a little examination, I found that the tiger had paid a second visit to the body, as the pugs were quite fresh, and also that he had been wounded, as gouts of blood were visible here and there, which the Doctor and shekarry had evidently followed up, as we could tell by their tracks. Such being the case, we immediately joined the trail, and in a little while came up with the Doctor and the shekarry.

"Well, Doctor," exclaimed Fred, "you got a shot, did you not?"

"Indeed I did," answered the doctor; "and never was a chance so lost. I ought to have killed him over and over again; as it is, I have hit him hard, I believe, but at first I was so intent on watching his movements that I did not think of firing, and this dolt here (Fred's shekarry) becoming impatient began to grumble, which noise attracted his attention, and he was off with a bound, when I let fly at his shoulder, and rolled him over for the moment; but he soon got on his feet again, and scrambled off, notwithstanding I gave him my second barrel, which I fancy must have missed, for he paid no more attention to it than if I had spat at him. It was, however, a splendid sight to see him advance. Without the slightest noise, onward he came, with a slow and measured pace, turning his head and rolling his eyes in all directions. If a dry branch cracked, or a leaf rustled

as he walked, he stopped, and looked anxiously round. For a moment he stood half concealed behind a bush, and peered all round, then he began to purr loudly, and at last approached the carcass, near which a couple of jackals and half a dozen vultures were sitting, not daring to meddle with it, as they must have been aware of his presence. Then the jackals slunk away howling, whilst the vultures flew round in circles, uttering angry screams, and the tiger, with a fierce growl, as if indignant that his prey should be molested in his absence, threw himself upon the carcass."

"I can well excuse your letting him go, doctor," said I, "for many a time have I experienced a similar forgetfulness, and allowed the game to escape in the same manner. You must not, however, give up your tiger as lost; he is evidently badly hit, as I can tell by the helpless manner he has dragged himself through the bushes, and it will be strange to me if my knowledge of woodcraft, aided by my shekarries and dogs, cannot show us something more of him."

So saying, I bade Chineah loose Ponto (poor Walter's legacy), and going in front, I laid him on the trail. He, perfectly knowing his work, took up the scent immediately, and after half an hour's tramp, led us into a patch of high reeds interspersed with bush, jutting into a grassy swamp. Here we heard a low growling, which informed us that we had run the game close; so forming a line with our people in the centre, we pushed on, knowing that he must either

break into the open, when we should get fair shots, or turn back against us. It was exciting work, and with palpitating hearts we advanced abreast slowly, each peering forward among the reeds and tangled bush, expecting every moment that the wounded brute would charge. Ponto kept three or four paces in front of me, his apology for a tail moving to and fro, and his mouth slavering with intense excitement. Suddenly he started back and gave tongue, and without a roar or even a rustling in the grass, a yellow mass sprang from behind a bush in front of us. Three rifles cracked, the reports of which were blended like that of one shot, and a magnificent tigress lay sprawling in the last agonies within six paces of us, whom the Doctor put out of her misery by a well-administered ball behind the ear. We were about to rush forward, and examine the stricken brute, which was still gasping, when again a savage growl was heard in the same bush, and a large tiger with his off fore-arm broken endeavoured to drag himself across the swamp. Fred, who caught sight of him first, let drive, and rolled him over, and I gave him my second barrel, which finished him. We immediately set to work to "despoil the fallen," and as the day was far advanced after the operation was finished, we set out on our homeward journey.

The sun had gone down some time before we arrived at our hut, and as we went along, strange wild cries appeared to rage through the forest, and among the voices which resounded together, we could

only distinguish those that were heard singly during momentary pauses that from time to time took place in the chorus. Elk were uttering their loud cries of defiance, which were answered on all sides until their hoarse bellowing became incessant, when the deep hollow roar of a tiger re-echoed through the arches of the forest, and for an interval all was still save the noise of the great cicadae in the trees. Then the howling of a troop of jackals, or the melancholy cry of the hyena would pierce the night-air, and again the almost deafening chorus would recommence.

At last we reached our tent; and, after the luxury of a bath in a large square bowrie or well, sat down to dinner with appetites well sharpened by our first day's hunting in the Dehra Doon.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
 The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
 Whose honest heart is still his master's own,
 Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone.”

BYRON.

THE DEHRA DOON AND THE TERAÍ.

Camp struck.—Game *en route*.—The kaleege, or silver pheasant.—Indian partridges.—Our new bivouac.—A turn up in the woods.—The tiger-cat.—My dog Ponto; his sagacity, courage, and wonderful instinct.—Our new bivouac.—Plans for the morrow.—A wild spot.—Game afoot.—A female panther wounded, and an unexpected rencontre.—Warm work satisfactorily concluded.—A cub caught.—More game.—We are early baulked of our pork-chops by another hunter.—Two of a trade never agree: exemplification of the proverb.—Return to camp.—Fred's native guest.—The Doctor falls in with spoor.—Pleasant evening.—The start.—Signs of game.—The trail.—A herd in view.—Plan of operations.—Good sport.—The novice's success.—Return to camp.

THE next morning, some time before dawn, we were apprised that it was time to be stirring, from the noise made by the Lascars loosening the pegs preparatory to striking the tent; and donning our hunting gear, we partook of an early breakfast, reclining on carpets placed near the embers of a huge log fire, whilst our people packed up our goods and chattels, it having been determined to move our camp to a valley in the Ghuriali hills, which was considered by Fred's shekarries to be a certain find for large game;

moreover a herd of elephant had been seen in the vicinity a couple of days before. As soon as it was sufficiently light to discern the track, our tattoos (ponies) and coolies being laden, we commenced our march, ourselves and shekarries forming the advanced guard, whilst the baggage followed up in the rear.

Elk had already commenced bellowing, and their loud cries of defiance resounding from every side of the forest might by unaccustomed ears have been mistaken for the roaring of much more dangerous animals, so hoarse and hollow did they sound. At daybreak pea fowl, jungle fowl, and partridge began calling in all directions; and as we did not expect to meet with any large game *en route*, some of our people having been over the ground the day before, it was determined to make a general bag, and, advancing in skirmishing order, we had excellent sport, killing several silver pheasants—then quite a new bird to me—besides black and grey partridge, chickore, and hares.

The kaleege, or silver pheasant (*Euplocamus albocristatus*), is about the same size as our English breed, being twenty-six inches long and thirty-two across the wings, and has a white crest. Round the eye, the iris of which is a brownish hazel, is a naked red skin, which, although it varies in colour, is peculiar to all the castes of Himalayan pheasants. The plumage of the male is almost black, having a bluish shade on the back of the head, neck, and breast, and on the body at intervals are rows of silver-white

feathers, broad at the base and tapering to a point. The female is smaller than the male, and is of a brown game colour. Their general habits much resemble those of the common jungle fowl. The grey partridge we killed were rather larger than the ordinary birds of the plains, the male being over thirteen inches long, and weighed about eleven ounces, the hen twelve inches long, and two ounces less in weight. They are redder than the English bird, and more rapid in their flight, but are prone to run, being very nimble on foot. The female generally lays from twelve to eighteen eggs of a greyish colour, speckled with red and brown, and she hatches them in twenty days, the chicks getting strong within a week from breaking the shell. Their ordinary cry resembles the syllables "Pu-tee-la! pu-tee-la!" repeated quickly. They are very pugnacious, and are often kept for fighting purposes, those being preferred that have double spurs, the second rising from the roots of the first. The black partridge is a most game-looking bird, the plumage being of a bright glossy black, speckled with white round spots. The cock is about fourteen inches in length, and often weighs fifteen ounces. They pair in May, the hen laying from ten to fifteen eggs of a light blue colour. The chickore very much resembles the ordinary French partridge, the colours being rather brighter and the beak red. They are very hard to put up without dogs, being always on the run.

After a tramp of about four hours, during which

time our people were laden with small game, we arrived at the Ghuriali hills, and, skirting the base, made our way for a couple of miles up a densely wooded ravine, at the bottom of which flowed a turbulent mountain torrent; and as Fred informed us that this was to be our temporary head-quarters, we halted the coolies, and commenced to reconnoitre the ground in order to select a suitable place for our camp.

Following up the course of the stream, which came tumbling down the gorge, forming a succession of black and deep pools connected with each other by foaming cascades and whirling eddies, we fixed upon a small elevation by its banks for our bivouac, and forthwith set our people to clear it with their axes. Whilst so engaged, my attention was attracted by the shrieking of a troop of monkeys at no great distance up the valley; and leaving Fred to superintend the domestic arrangements, the Doctor and I, followed by Googooloo carrying a spare gun, started off to ascertain the cause of the commotion amongst the sons of Haniman. Guided by the screaming, which still continued, we came to a patch of bamboo jungle, where we found a desperate encounter taking place between a tiger cat and a huge black monkey. They appeared to be exceedingly well matched, and at first the issue of the contest seemed doubtful, for although the tiger cat exceeded the monkey in size and strength, the latter managed to keep hold of his adversary's fore paws with his hind-feet, whilst his arms were clasped

tightly round its neck, and his ferocious-looking fangs were buried in its throat. The rest of the troop watched the contest with intense excitement depicted in their countenances, and, not contented with encouraging their champion with the most passionate vociferations, regardless of fair play, every now and again one or two of their number would drop from the branches overhead, and give the tiger cat a sly bite, or attract his attention by making threatening grimaces and chattering within a few inches of his nose. One monkey, swinging down from an overhanging bamboo, instead of helping his companion, coolly commenced searching for fleas in the roots of the hair on the tiger cat's hind-quarters, grunting and chattering with intense satisfaction as he caught his game, looked at it for a moment, and then ate it with great gusto. Notwithstanding the aid Master Jacko received from his friends, the strength of his antagonist was beginning to tell; and growing faint from fright, he began to emit the most piteous cries of distress, which awakened the Doctor's compassion, and he terminated the contest by shooting his opponent through the head. As the fur was beautifully marked we took off the skin, and were much surprised at the mass of sinew and cartilage the body and limbs then presented, which accounted for its great physical power. The tiger cat is a perfect tiger in miniature, and its nature and habits much resemble that animal, for it is seldom seen in the day, but at night prowls through the forest far and wide in search of prey,

which it shows great cunning and skill in seizing The havoc these animals commit amongst game must be immense, on account of the great quantity of food they require. I had frequently heard their strange, harsh, unearthly cry after nightfall in the deep jungle before I could account for it; but one quiet moonlight night, as I was watching by a pool of water, the usual drinking place of a tiger, I heard two of these wild voices calling and answering one another close at hand, which Chineah said was the cry of ghoonts or demons, but by the light of the moon I perceived that the noises came from a couple of tiger cats. When wounded, these animals will fly at their assailant in the most ferocious manner; and I think I never saw any creature fight so desperately, or one that is so exceedingly tenacious of life. It takes a very good dog indeed to kill a tiger cat single-handed; and I have seen many a hound, that would pin a deer or tackle a bear without hesitation, fight shy of one of these wild-looking animals, for when they are enraged every hair on their body stands on end, making them look twice as large as they really are.

I have before mentioned one or two incidents illustrating the instinct, almost amounting to reason, of some of my canine followers, more especially as developed in Ponto (a cross between the English foxhound and Bringarry breed), who was formerly the inseparable companion of the celebrated sportsman, the late Walter M——. From my own observation,

I am of opinion that the manner of living of a dog has as much to do in bringing out his qualities as the mere education or breaking in ; for instance, Ponto, by living constantly with his master instead of in the kennel, sleeping near him either in the bungalow or by the watch-fire, and seeing and hearing everything that went on, had not only learnt the meaning of what he saw, but also, in a most wonderful manner, could understand almost everything that was said, either relating to himself, the ordinary routine of camp life, or his duty in the field. He knew that it was my custom before I got up in the morning to have cooled soda water in cantonment or black coffee in camp, and if the servant whose business it was to prepare it happened to oversleep himself I had only to tell Ponto, and he would rouse him at once, distinguishing him from the rest of the servants without the slightest hesitation, although a dozen of them might be lying on mats in the veranda all entirely enveloped in the same kind of white chedder or sheet. He also knew most of my people by name, and would bring them to me whenever I ordered him. After all kinds of game, small as well as large, I never saw his equal ; for whenever anything was afoot, by watching his master's looks he seemed to understand his meaning. He would retrieve a snipe or track a wounded tiger with equal certainty ; in the latter case leading his master fearlessly and quietly a pace in advance along the trail with the greatest precision and address. When out deer-stalking he would creep along by my

side with the greatest caution, never showing himself, or making the slightest noise. When I halted he lay down, and after I had fired, if the quarry was only wounded, he would follow up the shots with the most untiring perseverance, singling out the wounded animal from the rest of the herd, and never leaving the trail, whatever obstacles he might encounter *en route*, until he brought him to bay, when, showing the greatest address in avoiding the horns, he would pin him by the throat and strangle him; or when the deer was too powerful for him alone—which was rarely the case, except when only slightly wounded—he would show great cunning and generalship in attracting its attention, so as to prevent its escape, giving tongue until I came up. When he had killed the game, or if he found it dead, he would trot back, look up in my face with a peculiar expression, whine with delight, and then lead me up to the spot where he had left it. His great delight was large game hunting; and, although he always preferred accompanying me on such occasions, yet he would go with any one else if I ordered him, looking to him only for orders whilst with him. I think he sometimes looked upon snipe shooting in the hot weather as rather a bore, for, although he never seemed to get fatigued in the forest, after some hours' tramping through the paddy fields and mud I have seen him quite done up, and heard him growl and grumble as he went along, as if he thought "*le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*." He looked upon an indifferent shot

with the most supreme contempt, and the manner in which he showed his indignation at bad shooting was sometimes highly amusing. Once I was prevented from joining a contemplated snipe-shooting party by a sudden call of duty, and I lent Ponto to a friend of the Civil service, who was staying with me for a few days, at the same time sending my shekarry Chineah with him to point out the best ground. Birds were plentiful, and got up thickly enough, but G—— could not manage to hit any of them. After the first three or four shots, Ponto hunted for some time in the spots where the game ought to have fallen, and when he could not find them, each time came up to my friend and looked him in the face as if to inquire the reason why. Miss followed miss, and at length he began to get angry; thinking, perhaps, that G—— was making game of him, he grumbled audibly after each report, and at last would no longer hunt. Coaxed by Chineah, he, however, had another trial; but when a large whisp of snipe got up from close under foot, and both barrels were discharged with similar result, he could stand it no longer, but giving vent to his indignation by a long, angry howl, he turned tail, and trotted out of the rice fields, never stopping until he got home. Although he had previously been very good friends with G——, after this unfortunate display of marksmanship he took no more notice of him, and always growled or got out of the way whenever he attempted to fondle him. He also made very audible remon-

stances whenever he saw him come near the glass case which contained my guns, as if he did not wish him to be allowed to meddle with them. In cantonment he lived on terms of friendship with numerous kinds of tame animals, against which in their wild state he was accustomed to wage war; and young bears, hunting leopards, deer, antelope, monkeys, mongeese, pea-fowl, and partridge that I kept about the house were allowed to wander unmolested, although he seemed to wish to keep aloof from them, and never encouraged any undue familiarity. With Gooty my favourite Mahratta pony, however, the case was very different, for the reciprocal affection between these two faithful servants was something extraordinary. Ponto used to visit the pony in his stall many times during the day, often carrying to him biscuits or scraps of bread from his own food, and Gooty would neigh and whinny in recognition of the dog's whine. With the rest of my canine followers he was ever the acknowledged leader, although he used to assume quite an aristocratic bearing with them, seeming at all times to prefer his master's society to their diversions. Even my huge Poligar hounds, Ali and Hassan, who were almost as big as donkeys, used to pay him the most deferential respect, and I have often been much struck with the extraordinary power he had in communicating to them his ideas and wishes, which was very strongly evinced in the following incident. Whilst on a shooting expedition in the Sattimungalum dis-

trict, Chineah, my head shekarry, had sent Googooloo to purchase some rice, &c., in a small village some two or three miles from my camp, accompanied by Ponto. Here the buckal shopkeeper turned out a rogue; for, pretending not to understand the Yanadi's vernacular, he kept both the rice and the money. A serious quarrel ensued, the buckal was helped by the other villagers, and Googooloo and Ponto came off second best, both receiving several bruises, and the latter was also set on by two of the buckal's dogs, aided by several others. When my man came back to camp, and made a complaint to me of the unfair treatment he had received, I immediately mounted my nag, and, accompanied by most of the gang, set out for the village where the fracas had taken place, in order to make sure that the mookia, or head man, punished the guilty parties. As we got near the place we heard a great row and hubbub: and when we entered we found that Ponto had been before us in satiating his vengeance for the injuries and insults he had received. On arrival at the tents he had collected the Poligars and three other dogs I had at the time, and all trotted off in a body to the village, where they commenced a signal retaliation against the Pariah race, killing the buckal's two dogs and three others outright, besides giving the shopkeeper himself such a reminder when he came out to assist his own dogs, that probably prevented his *sitting* comfortably for a month afterwards. Such being the case, we did not care to have further punishment

inflicted upon the poor wretch, who for long afterwards was often threatened by the villagers with another visit from the sahib's thief-catching dog. Such a companion in the forest was of course invaluable, and much of the success I had in large game shooting I may attribute to his wonderful sagacity and courage.

When we returned to our people we found the tent pitched, the dinner under weigh, and everything comfortably arranged for passing the night, so we adjourned to a pool at the foot of a small murmuring cascade, and refreshed ourselves with a most delightful bathe before sitting down to table; after which we assembled our people round the log fire, and held a solemn consultation as to the morrow's proceedings. It was determined that Fred and two of his people should go along the Tiri road and meet a Ghoorka chief, who had been invited to join our party, whilst the Doctor and I, dividing our people into two parties, reconnoitred each side of the valley in search of game. A brew of Glenlivet was made, tobacco served out, and, after several hours' agreeable conversation, in which our people freely joined, the night-watch was set, and we retired to rest.

The next morning, refreshed and invigorated by wholesome sleep, we breakfasted at early dawn, and shortly afterwards each set out on his way. Googooloo and most of the other shekarries went with the Doctor along the course of the river to look for elephant spoor, whilst Chineah and two of the Puharee coolies

with the dogs accompanied me in a clamber up the hills, where I hoped to get some venison for camp consumption.

We were obliged to follow the right bank of the stream for some distance, as the forest was too dense for us to penetrate; but at last, by creeping up the dry bed of a tributary torrent, and groping our way, often almost in darkness, under overhanging boughs covered with heavy foliage, we got into a deep cleft or narrow gorge in the side of the mountain, which seemed to have been caused by some violent convulsion of nature. At first it appeared that all further passage was closed by a precipitous wall of rock, often quite vertical, although fringed in places with trees growing out of fissures in the sides; but as it was such a strange, wild kind of place, I determined to explore it, and, after some very difficult travelling along narrow ledges and jutting shelves of stratification, where the footing was most insecure, I managed to scramble into a hollow basin, where the ravine divided, each branch appearing to lead up the side of the mountain. Here were some noble teak-trees, and a few clumps of bamboos of enormous proportions, besides patches of fern and luxurious grasses. From a crack in the solid rock, about fifteen feet from the base, issued two small streams, evidently having the same source, which fell into a beautiful natural basin, bordered with short green turf. The dogs immediately made their way down to this spot to drink, and were engaged in chasing and diving after a

couple of saucy-looking little dab-chicks or lesser grebe, when suddenly I heard Ponto give tongue, followed by an unmistakable whine, which told me that *we were not alone* in the glen, separated even as it appeared to be from the rest of the world. From his attitude, as he stood sniffing the air with his fore-paw raised, his head lifted, his lips apart, showing his teeth, and now and then giving a low growl, I knew by experience that some of the feline race were in close proximity, and made my preparations accordingly, bidding Chineah fasten up the Poligars in their slips, and give them in charge of one of the Puharce coolies, whilst he kept near me with the second gun, for I only happened to have two out with me that day. A small hill dog belonging to one of my people kept running backwards and forwards about twenty paces in front, in spite of our endeavours to keep him back, to Ponto's great annoyance, as he and I were making casts about the place in search of the trail. A very few turns served to satisfy us both on this point, for we almost immediately came upon the pugs of what appeared to be a family of either panthers or leopards, which we were steadily following up, when suddenly a female panther, with a short low growl, pounced upon the poor Puharee dog, breaking his back with a blow from her muscular paw, and carrying him off as cat would a mouse. At this moment my view of the transaction was partly obstructed by an intervening bush; but getting a momentary glimpse as she bounded along, I gave her the contents of both

barrels, which tumbled her over and made her relinquish her prey, but did not prove mortal, for in the twinkling of an eye she recovered her feet, and sprang towards us, uttering a savage roar, when the Poligars, who, on seeing the game, had forcibly broken away from the man who held them, dashed forward, and scared by their sudden appearance she swerved, raised her head, and looked out for a line of retreat, which action gave Ponto a chance, and the gallant dog rushed in and pinned her by the back sinew of the hind leg, whilst at the same time Hassan and Ali fastened on each side of her, one by the ear and the other on the throat. I had received my second gun from Chineah the moment my first was discharged, but I was afraid to fire lest I should injure my dogs, and was waiting for a fairer chance, when suddenly, with a scream of rage, the male panther appeared, and made a leap which would have very summarily disposed of poor Ponto, if I had not luckily stopped him in mid-career by almost simultaneously giving him the contents of both barrels, killing him at once. The game was now becoming hot, for a violent struggle was still going on between my dogs and the wounded female, whose strength was so great, notwithstanding one of her fore-arms was shattered and useless, that she twice managed to shake off the Poligars, although Ponto still kept his hold; and fearing lest my favourite might get a mauling before I should have time to reload, I drew my hunting-knife, and, watching my

opportunity, plunged it up to the hilt behind her shoulder-blade, when she reared up, gave a hollow groan, and dropped dead on her side. The Poligars, when they saw their antagonist was dead, lay quietly down, and began to lick the scratches and bruises they had received in the conflict; but old matter-of-fact Ponto, in a most cautious manner, went up to each of the carcasses, examined them all round, as if to satisfy himself that there was no life remaining; after which he came trotting up to me as I was reloading, looked up in my face in a peculiarly knowing manner, wagged his apology for a tail, and lay down at my feet grunting with intense satisfaction.

Having rubbed the blood and dirt off the dogs, and examined their limbs carefully, so as to make sure that they had received no serious injury, we again took up the panthers' trail, which led us to a shelving rock, where in a small cave we found two young panther cubs, one of which the dogs killed, and the other, a young male, we caught alive. He was not larger than a Clumber spaniel, but already very ferocious, scratching and biting at every one who approached; and as he would not walk, I had him slung to a bamboo, so as to be more easily carried, having first taken the precaution of fastening up his mouth. I then sent Chineah to despoil the dead panthers, bidding the rest of the people go to the water and there wait, whilst I, accompanied by Ponto, continued my survey of the glen. I had not gone far when I came upon the slots of a sounder of hog,

and whilst I was following them up, I perceived the fresh pugs of a panther, to which I did not give much attention, supposing them to have been made by one of those I had killed. Ponto, however, was not so mistaken, but gave a peculiar whine, as if apprehensive of danger, which I not understanding, and fearing lest the noise might alarm the game, ordered him to fall back and lie down. Hardly had he done so, than I heard the grunting and shrill squealing of a young hog, and, guided by the sounds, I crept quietly forward on my hands and knees through some high grass, until I got near enough to see a fine sow, surrounded by a numerous litter, turning up the soil and feeding upon the young roots of the grass. I watched her proceedings for a moment, and was considering whether to fire or not, being rather unwilling to kill the mother of such a numerous small family, when I heard a slight rustling noise within a few paces to my left, which at first I imagined to have been caused by the dog, but on turning round, to my surprise I saw a fine full-grown panther gathering himself up as if to make a spring. His attention was evidently entirely centred in the prospect of a pork dinner, for he licked his slavering lips repeatedly, and his green eyes were fixed intently upon the sow, who, strangely enough, had not yet caught the taint in the air. I quickly raised my rifle, and aiming behind the massive shoulder, which was fully exposed as he crouched, pulled trigger, and the panther sprang into the air stone dead. The sow, alarmed, dashed forward most

courageously to protect her young, and in self-defence I was obliged to give her my remaining barrel as she charged close by me. The bullet passing through the body, "grassed" her at once, and with the aid of Ponto, who came up immediately on hearing the report, I managed to despatch her with my knife. We now turned our attention to the squeakers, and Ponto and I soon managed to catch five of them alive, which I secured by fastening their legs together. This done, I made my way to the spring, where I waited until Chineah came up with the skins of the animals first killed, when I sent him and the coolies, under Ponto's guidance, to bring in the rest of the game. In the meantime I refreshed myself with a bath in the pool until their return, when we set out on our route towards camp, and by following a deer-run, descended the hill much more easily than by the way we had mounted. We got to the tent an hour before sunset, and found Fred and his native friend, the Ghoorka chief, enjoying their manillas, and superintending the taking up of nets that had been laid across the stream, in order to provide our table with a dish of the finny tribe, somewhat resembling small trout.

I was not at all disappointed with the physiognomy of our guest, who had a pleasing and animated expression when he spoke, with none of that servile, cringing obsequiousness which is the general characteristic of most of the higher classes of natives in India. On the contrary, his manner was free and

wholly unembarrassed, although he was quite unaccustomed to meet Europeans. He had very large eyes, which would have been fierce if it had not been for the very long eye-lashes with which they were fringed, an aquiline nose, small moustache, and well-formed mouth. Fred had first met with him whilst on a shooting expedition, when he and several of his people were prostrated with fever; and luckily having a medicine chest amongst his baggage, he managed, by a judicious administration of quinine, to set them all on their legs again. Since then a reciprocal friendship had sprung up between them, and Fred had visited his mountain fastness, where he was most hospitably entertained. We had a second tent pitched a short distance from ours, in case he might prefer to eat alone, but he very quaintly informed us that he left his caste prejudice with the Brahmins when he went out either to fight or to hunt. The Doctor and his party had not yet arrived, although early in the day he had sent in a cooly with a young spotted deer he had shot; so, after waiting half an hour, which was strictly against camp law, we sat down to dinner without him; but had hardly commenced than his musical voice was heard some distance up the valley troling the old air, "Lochaber no more," and shortly afterwards he made his appearance. Besides a couple of spotted deer, he had killed a large bear, and had fallen in with signs of elephant that Googooloo declared were not twelve hours old. We therefore determined to have a care-

ful hunt in that direction the next day, and after dinner, when our people were assembled, gave the necessary directions.

The next morning, shortly after daybreak, our arms were overhauled, and as soon as there was light enough to distinguish our route, we set out for the spot where the Doctor had seen the trail, under Googooloo's guidance; and pursuing our way with difficulty, on account of the denseness of the forest, after a tramp of about three hours we came to it, and sure enough there was the spoor of a herd of seven elephants, which appeared to me to be about two days old. Following up the track they had made by trampling through the bush, we found easier than clambering up the rocky watercourse, and in another hour we arrived at a grassy swamp, which bore traces of having very lately been frequented by elephants, as it was covered in all directions with spoor varying from a few hours to three days old. On further examination I found signs that led me to suppose that the herd had there passed part of the night, for in two or three places I noticed marks of their having lain down on their broad sides, and one must have been a bull, as I distinguished the indentation of a large tusk in the soil. As neither the Doctor nor the Ghoorka had yet killed an elephant, and both were most desirous of doing so, Fred and I agreed to reserve our fire, so as to give them the first chance; and to obviate the necessity of having more people about us than necessary, each slung a second gun on his shoul-

der, Chineah and Googooloo, our best trackers, only taking up the trail, whilst the rest waited for our return. Roused to fresh exertion by the prospect of such noble game, we got over the ground very quickly, and following the trail up the side of the hill, at last got on some large teak forest, where we found much fresher spoor, and unmistakable signs that indicated the immediate proximity of the animals we were in search of. Here I thought it advisable to halt the party whilst I and Googooloo went forward to reconnoitre; and bidding them be quiet as possible, we crept forward along the trail, and in a few minutes caught a glimpse of a herd of five elephants, one of which was a respectably sized tusker. We watched them for a few moments, as, unconscious of our presence, they browsed on the young and tender branches or tufts of grass, which latter they beat against the trees to free from earth before eating, making a curious tapping noise, that had attracted our attention some time before we caught sight of them. Having made a cursory examination of the ground, so as to mark the best line of approach, we returned to our companions, who were looking out for us most anxiously; and it was arranged that Fred and I should make a circuit, so as to get up the hill on the other side of the herd, whilst the Doctor and the Ghoorka, under the guidance of Googooloo, should creep under cover as near as they could, and take the first shots, which plan might give us the chance of stopping those that escaped. I then led them up to a clump of trees,

from whence the herd were visible, and having counselled the Doctor to give us sufficient time to get round and take post before he commenced operations, Fred and I went back some distance before we began our circuitous route. Having worked up the hill until we had got into the proper line to cut off any stragglers, we commenced to descend slowly towards where we thought the herd were feeding, for we were some hundreds of feet above the spot where we left the Doctor's party, when suddenly I heard a low sound and snapping of branches a short distance below us, and peeping cautiously over a boulder of rock, I saw a male and two females feeding quietly within fifty yards of us. I pointed them out to Fred, telling him to take the tusker as soon as the Doctor's party had opened fire. We remained a few moments in suspense, anxiously watching the game, and listening for the first shot, when to our surprise we heard a running fire some distance to our right; and as the elephants near us pricked up their ears and rushed forward alarmed at the report, Fred brought the male to his knees with his first shot, and despatched him with his second. I jumped up on the rock and shouted, to drive back the two females, who, struck with consternation at the fall of their companion, dashed up towards us too close to be pleasant, and I had just scared them off, when I heard Chineah shouting, "Kubadar sahib, kubadar!" (Take care, sir, take care!) and a crashing and rending in the jungle below us at the same moment told us what to expect

Seeing nothing, both Fred and I were rushing down the hill in the direction from which the noise proceeded, when a huge bull, followed by three females, burst out of the forest, but, either seeing us or catching the taint in the air, they stopped short. Although the distance was far too great to make certain of hitting any vital part, I gave him the contents of both barrels in the ear as he was swerving round, and Fred gave him a similar dose, which rolled him over for the moment; but he soon was on his legs again, and, reckless of the injuries he had received, charged towards us, tail on end, when I got a fair shot, and brought him to the ground by lodging a bullet in his brain. Whilst we were thus engaged, a continued file firing was kept up below; so, having made sure that our own game was secure, we joined the Doctor, who had killed a female and wounded a male (the one we subsequently killed). The Ghoorka had wounded another female, and, as he thought, killed her; but when he was about to secure the tail, to his surprise and consternation she got upon her knees, and would have made off, if he had not luckily managed to divide the tendons of her hind-leg with a cut from his short sword, and prevented her from moving any distance. The continued firing we heard were his subsequent attempts to finish her, which at last he managed to do, to his own intense satisfaction. Having secured the tails as trophies, we returned to the swamp where we had left the rest of the people, and sending back some of them to watch the tusks

until the bodies should be sufficiently decomposed to allow them to be pulled out, we made the best of our way to the tent. We remained hunting with various success in this part of the Doon for ten days longer, after which we returned to Fred's comfortable quarters at Dehra.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ My joy was in the wilderness to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountains’ tops,
Where the birds dare not build, nor insect’s wing
Flit o’er the herbless granite.” MANFRED.

THE DEHRA DOON AND MUSSOORIE.

Doon shooting.—An Indian pic-nic.—The Dripping Well of Sansa-Dharna.—An impromptu bear-hunt.—Return to Dehra.—The Doctor discovers a strange peculiarity in the atmosphere of the hills.—Preparations for a trip.—Puharee coolies.—The start.—Mussoorie.—Himalayan game.—The snow bear.—Musk deer.—Gooral.—Surrow.—Ibex.—Burrul and Thaar.—Moonal.—Koklass.—Cheer.—Argus and Snow pheasants.—Himalayan partridges.

DEHRA, being so central, is the best head-quarters for Doon shooting, and during our sojourn there we made several expeditions to different parts of the valley, enjoying first-rate sport, and rarely meeting with blank days. Elephants, however, were not so numerous as might have been expected from the likely appearance of the forest, having been driven into the more remote parts by the periodical burning of the Doon grass, which takes place in January and February. Notwithstanding we explored all their most favourite haunts, we only twice came across them, once near Jobrawallah, on the banks of the Sooswa river, and again in the Sankote forest, when on both occasions we killed. We also had some excellent tiger-shooting in different parts of the Doon

and amongst the Sewalic hills; but as these hunts afforded no incidents out of the common, I shall not enter into any description of them.

My companion, Fred, who was quite a ladies' man, and fond of what on the hills is termed "peacocking," or paying morning visits and discussing the weather, had a most extensive female acquaintance, and he and sundry others of his kidney managed to get up an impromptu pic-nic to the Dripping Well of Sansa-Dharna, which was attended by all the reigning spinsters and grass-widows of the station. The former, it was currently reported, had each a certain set speech for "juwabing" (literally, giving an answer to) aspirants for connubial bliss, it being no uncommon event in these parts for a belle to have the question popped, on an average, some seven times per week, or to receive half a score similar honours the morning after a club-ball or the bachelors' bi-weekly reunion party.

On the appointed morning we all met at the house of one of the principal personages of the station at daybreak, and, after a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, prepared for a start. Forming an imposing cavalcade of gaily-caparisoned elephants, horsemen, amazons, palanquins, tonjons, and jampanees, we passed through the small village of Nagul, and wound along the banks of the river Soane by a rocky and rather precipitous paths, which somewhat tried the nerves of the female equestrians, and gave ample opportunity for displays of gallantry, each fair one

being attended by one or more *cavaliers servante*. After a ride of about three hours, we arrived at the dripping well, which is close to a bend in the river, and here we found a couple of tents pitched, whilst hard by, on a green knoll, shaded by a giant peepul-tree, was spread a tablecloth covered with all the necessary accessories for invigorating the system. In a few moments elephants and horses were picketed under the trees round about, the palanquins, &c., drawn up in rows, and the party proceeded to examine this strange natural phenomenon, which is caused by a small stream flowing over a high shelving rock, about sixty paces in length, of so porous a nature as to allow the water to filter through and fall in a perpetual shower. The under face of the rock is covered with stalactites, and in a natural basin below, the water is collected, which the Doctor discovered to be strongly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen. On the right of the rock is a large natural grotto filled with water to the depth of two feet, and here the stalactites were very beautiful, assuming the appearance of pillars and quaint Gothic arches supporting the roof. The "assembly" sounding on a key-bugle stopped several learned dissertations and explanatory theories on this natural shower-bath, to the great relief, I imagined, of the ladies, who good-temperedly were trying to look patient under the infliction, and all met round the "spread," where, having disposed of our persons upon mats and carpets, in the style we are told the ancient Romans adopted under similar

circumstances, we did ample justice to our good cheer, which was seasoned with appetite, joviality, and harmony. Sallies of wit flowed with the champagne and sparkling moselle, calling forth many a smart repartee from the gentler sex; jest followed jest, and never had the arches of the old forest rung with such 'peals of merry laughter, or echoed such wild shouts of revelry. Songs, sentimental and comic, succeeded, and one fair girl warbled some of those touching melodies of auld lang syne with a feeling and expression that went home to every heart, recalling bygone scenes to mind, awakening recollections that for years had slept, and causing tears to glisten in the eye of more than one rough weather-beaten veteran. After a time a dance was proposed, and the forethought of our master of the ceremonies now showed itself conspicuous, for a band had been provided, and although a gentleman (who it was presumed had corns, or whose parents had not paid the extra twopence for accomplishments) was heard to observe that there was not plain enough to swing a cat round, waltzes, quadrilles, polkas, and country-dances followed each other in rapid succession, which again gave place to sundry games, such as blind-man's buff, forfeits, and hunt the slipper, the old hands enjoying the fun as much as the young ones. Whilst we were all sitting in a circle engaged in the latter amusement, a servant, having intense excitement depicted in his countenance, came up with the intelligence that a large bear had just been seen making

his way down a nullah close at hand. Immediately all who had brought guns with them started off and followed up the trail, which was soon found, evidently quite fresh, and after a sharp run he was caught sight of leisurely picking his way up a deep sot or cleft in the side of a low hill, at about a hundred yards distant. A young officer of the Ghoorka corps, stationed at Dehra, who had outstripped the rest in running, fired, and rolled him over, with a ball in the hind-quarters; but giving vent to his indignation by a savage roar, he instantly recovered his legs, and came straight at us. Being perceived by some of the rest, a straggling volley was directed against him, and he disappeared, having fallen, as we thought, killed, although, from the broken nature of the ground, he remained hidden from our view. Then there was a general rush to secure the prize, and on we all pressed in a body up the gully, clambering over the loose rocks and boulders in no little confusion, when suddenly a tremendous roar was heard in the front, and most unexpectedly a huge mass of black fur came rolling amongst us, capsizing three or four in its course. I was a little behind, and could not fire on account of those in front, some of whom, appalled by the awful noise, fairly turned tail; but Fred, who was directly in the line of the charge, let drive right and left almost simultaneously from the hip, for the bear being almost upon him, he had not time to raise his rifle to the shoulder, and both shots taking effect in the chest, with a noise between a

grunt and a moan (the peculiar death-note of a bear) our assailant rolled over dead, to the intense satisfaction of more than one of the party, several of whom were not a little bruised by tumbling amongst the rocks in their hasty endeavours to get out of his clutches. The bear was a handsome specimen, so when the people came up the carcass was slung on poles and carried down to the tents. After this little episode, dancing and other amusements were carried on as before, pistol practice at bottles was introduced, and several matches got up between the ladies, some of whom proved quite proficient in the art; then, as the sun began to get low, we mounted our animals and commenced our homeward route towards Dehra, where, with the aid of cheel-pine torches, we arrived about midnight. As we were supping in Fred's comfortable quarters, the Doctor, looking significantly at our host, who had only just turned up from escorting some fair party home, remarked, in his dry, quaint manner, that he imagined there was something peculiarly "cornific" in the atmosphere so near the mountains, the influence of which extended to other animals besides ibex and wild sheep.

After this trip a couple of days were devoted to preparations for our expedition amongst the mountains to the source of the Ganges. Stores, groceries, and supplies of all kinds were provided and packed securely in our waterproof "kiltas," iron-shod alpen-stocks were made, and a light portable bridge and ladder of my own invention constructed, which latter arrangement

I shall describe, as it proved on many occasions very useful during our trip, for with it we could in a moment either bridge a nullah eighteen feet wide or climb a scarp of twenty. It somewhat resembled the arm of a fire-escape, having a canvas back and strong male bamboo sides, bound with iron, strong hooks being fastened at one end and spikes at the other. The rings, however, were all of rope, except those at the top and bottom, which were of stout iron, and movable, so that the whole could be taken to pieces for carriage or put together in a moment.

As the roads, or rather tracks, were impassable, even for ghoomts, or mountain ponies, all our baggage had to be carried by Puharree coolies, which considerably swelled the number of our camp followers. The Puharrees, a caste of Hindoos, are divided into two classes, the Gungarees or low-country men (from "gunga," a valley), and the Purbutees, or hill men (from "purbut," a peak). The latter are stout, robust, and hardy mountaineers, generally short in stature, but capable of undergoing much exertion and fatigue on very simple fare, their ordinary food being chapaties, or girdle-cakes, made of coarse flour, mixed into a paste with water, seasoned with a little salt, and baked upon an iron plate. The men wear loosely-fitting tunics, gathered in and fastened at the waist with a cotton belt, and wide peg-top trousers, tight at the ankle, both garments being made of a coarse blanket-like material, round cap of the same, or sometimes a white turban and network sandals of curious construc-

tion. The coolies we engaged were all of the latter class, and had been carefully selected as good men some days before by Surmoor, their chief, who had been with Fred on several former occasions. They all received a month's pay in advance, with a thick, coarse, country blanket, and as they mustered in front of the bungalow, I thought I had never seen a more likely-looking set of fellows for the work. Our next step was to procure a couple of "purwanahs," or letters of authority, one from the civil powers, and the other from the Teeree rajah, without which we might have been subject to much inconvenience in procuring supplies. The vakeel of the rajah also sent us one of his peons to enforce every assistance, and he proved a very useful fellow in coercing the Brahmin and Rajpoot mookias, or head men of villages, who, for the most part, are an apathetic set of scoundrels, that do as little as they can to assist travellers.

Our baggage consisted of a good-sized routee, or hill tent, which, slung on the portable bridge, was easily carried by four men, two small scouting tents, somewhat resembling the *tents d'abri* of the French chasseurs, but larger and more commodious, although each was a light load for one cooly; three painted canvas packages, containing bedding, blankets, &c.; and twenty-six kiltas, sixteen of which were filled with clothes, ammunition stores, and supplies of every kind that we calculated would last us for two months; four contained "atar," or coarse flour, rice, curry stuff, and salt for our people; two held our cooking

utensils, two cheel-pine torches and firewood; and two contained a complete breakfast kit, which, with one of the scouting tents, was sent on the day before, so that our breakfast was always ready by the time we arrived on the new ground, or half way, when the march was very long. Thus, although we eschewed beer, and curtailed all extraneous baggage, we had thirty-two cooly loads, each man carrying about fifty pounds' weight. All our preparations and arrangements being completed, we bade adieu to our friends in Dehra, and sending on our people, drove to Raj-poor, at the foot of the Mussoorie hills, the first range of the Himalaya that rise about four thousand feet above the Doon. The eastern part, on which is Landour the military cantonment, rises about a thousand feet higher.

After a first-rate breakfast at a comfortable hotel kept by a *ci-devant* trooper, we commenced the ascent, one of the most delightful walks that I ever met with in any part of the globe. The road winds in zig-zags cut along the face of the hill, but we frequently availed ourselves of native paths, which, although much steeper, cut off corners and shortened the route considerably. As we ascended, a great change was observable in the nature of the forest, although the vegetation was everywhere most luxuriant. At the base the prevalent trees were sal and send varied with banians, patches of bamboo, wild banana, or acacia. Here and there gigantic festoons of leguminosæ or the pothos creeper stretched high over head, whilst

wild vines, peppers, and convolvuli of every colour formed natural bowers of living verdure that courted repose on every side. At an elevation of three thousand feet, the alteration of the appearance of the forest became strikingly apparent. The tropical trees gradually disappeared, and were replaced by evergreen oaks of magnificent foliage, noble rhododendrons with enormous lemon-scented blossoms, pines, magnolias, camellias and tree-ferns, whilst the underwood consisted chiefly of yellow raspberries, ivy, honeysuckle, and other plants of the temperate regions. The banks on the road-side, also, now began to be clothed with wild strawberry, geranium, violets, and different kinds of mosses and lichens never seen in the plains. It is difficult to conceive more beautiful forest scenery than the Mussoorie pass exhibits. At every turn a varied view presents itself, either of magnificent vistas in the woods, or glorious landscapes of the park-like Doon below. We fully enjoyed it, and although the ascent was a stiff seven miles' tramp, we were not the least fatigued on our arrival at Mussoorie, where we put up at Wolf's Crag, a comfortable and elegant little bungalow belonging to a friend of Fred's, that was beautifully situated on a rising ground facing the valley of the Doon. So much has been written about this far-famed salutarium, that I shall not enter into any detailed account of it; suffice it to say that the most glowing descriptions I had read did not come up to the reality. The scenery exceeded anything I had hitherto seen in

magnitude and grandeur, and I passed hours away gazing at the magnificent views that present themselves at every turn. We visited the club, one of the oldest and best establishments of the kind in India, and pretty well divided our time between billiards and lounging on the Mall. This beautiful promenade is a level road cut along the Saddle-back hill between Mussoorie and Landour, from which a splendid view of the low country may be obtained. The hill behind serves as an efficient shelter against the cold raw north winds that blow from the snowy regions. The houses, or rather bungalows, for few have upper stories, are generally perched on little undulations that crown the crest of the ridge facing the Doon, the north side being very bleak; and as each is situated in its own ground, and many have extensive gardens, the station occupies a large area. When we arrived Mussoorie was nearly empty, the season not having yet commenced; but it is generally very full from April to October, after which time the visitors return to the low country, scarcely any one remaining on the hills during the winter.

The first view of the Himalayas from the north side of the Landour ridge is, I believe, scarcely to be equalled for grandeur. Wave upon wave of snowy ranges, surmounted by majestic peaks of every conceivable shape, rise from the dark dense forest below, clearly and sharply defined against the deep-blue firmament. This panorama is sublime beyond conception, and offers a striking contrast to the southern

view, where the valley of the Doon, the Sewalik hills, and the reeking plains of India, with the windings of the Ganges and the Jumna, lay stretched before the eye as in a map. Even the genius of a Turner could not do justice to such scenery. How faintly, then, can words portray it! It is not in the power of language to convey an adequate impression of such magnitude, so "I am compelled to throw the reins on the neck of the steed of description, and relinquish the pursuit."

Before describing our route, I shall enter upon the different varieties of game that are to be found in the Ghurwal, describing such as are peculiar to the range. The feline species are commonly supposed to frequent only the warmer regions; but many of them are not very susceptible of cold, for in the Himalaya I killed a tiger above the snow limit, and have frequently come across the tracks of leopards at altitudes about fifteen thousand feet.

There are two kinds of bears found on this part of the range. The first is the ordinary black bear of the plains, previously described, and the second is the Himalayan, or snow bear, which is only found in the higher regions. They measure about nine feet long, stand about forty inches at the shoulder, and are covered with shaggy hair, which varies both in length and colour according to the season of the year. The winter coat, which is long, and of a greyish, or dirty yellowish shade, falls off in the summer, and is replaced by a shorter and much darker one, approach

ing a reddish-brown, that lengthens and grows gradually lighter as the cold season again approaches. The female and cubs are generally light-coloured, the latter having a circle or collar of white round the neck, which diminishes as they grow older, and finally disappears. In April the female generally gives birth to two cubs, which, when first born, are scarcely larger than rats, and of a tawny yellow colour. Within a month their eyes open, and in three months more they attain the size of a poodle dog, and are very playful, always wrestling together. Up to this time they are in considerable danger of being devoured by the male, if the mother does not guard them most carefully. They remain in the den with their parents until more offspring are born, when they are driven out to shift for themselves. Bears attain maturity at about five years of age, and the duration of their lives is estimated at over fifty years. In winter, snow bears retire to caves and clefts in the rocks, where they construct a kind of litter or bed of brushwood and moss, and, without becoming torpid, sleep for days together. At this time the Puharrees say that they cast the skin from the soles of their feet, but I cannot vouch for the fact, although they walk at this time as if they were lame. I rather think their feet become tender from want of use during their seclusion. In the spring, when the snow begins to melt, they emerge from their dens and feed upon young and tender shoots, grass, berries, roots, insects, and herbs. In summer

time their favourite food is fruit and honey, in autumn acorns and grain, and at such times they go very long distances to forage. The bear is rarely wantonly ferocious, except when molested and wounded, or when awakened suddenly from sleep; then he becomes a dangerous opponent, as he seldom shows any lack of courage. Rising on his hind-legs, with head erect, he endeavours to close with his assailant, and strikes tremendous blows with his fore-paw, invariably aiming at the face or head, and inflicting most ghastly wounds with his powerful claws. Although a carnivorous animal, the Himalayan bear feeds much more on vegetables than flesh, rarely attacking cattle or animals unless when forced by hunger.

Yellow wolves, hyenas, jackals, black-eared foxes and dholes or wild dogs, are common in some parts of the range; but as their nature and habits much resemble those of their brethren of the plains, I shall not enter into them. I have frequently come across packs of the latter animals in the birch forests, and watched them hunt down gooral or burrul, always running against the wind, and often chasing by relays. The game chiefly sought by the sportsman is the musk deer, and the different species of wild goats and sheep peculiar to the range. Of the former class there are three varieties, the gooral, surrow, and ibex; and of the latter, two, the burrul and thaar.

The musk deer, or kustooree, a solitary animal, is about the size of a roebuck, measuring forty inches

in length and twenty-two in height. The male is furnished with a sharp-pointed canine tooth, or tusk, curving backwards on each side of the upper jaw, which in a full-grown animal is about three inches in length. The general colour is speckled grey, approaching to black on the shoulders, back, and outside of the legs; reddish fawn along the lower part of the sides and inside the thighs, and dirty white under the throat and belly and inside the legs. The fur is very thick, coarse, and brittle, the hairs being nearly white at the roots, and becoming gradually darker towards the end, not unlike the small under-quills of the porcupine. The head is delicately formed, the ears broad and erect, and the tail very small, not being over an inch in length. In males this appendage is quite naked, except a small tuft at the end, caused by continued shaking about; but in females and young it remains covered with grey hair at the top and white underneath. The legs are very slender, the hoofs long and pointed, and they always go in bounds, all four feet leaving the ground, except when grazing. The female and young are rather lighter in colour than the males, and have no tusks, otherwise they are much alike. The musk pod, which is only found in males, is situated between the skin and the flesh close to the navel, and much resembles the gizzard of a fowl, having a small orifice through the skin, but no apparent internal connection with the stomach. The musk is found in dark-brown rounded grains, and the pod of a full-grown animal may yield

about an ounce on an average. Scarcely any is found in animals under two years old, and more in proportion as they become aged, although this is not always the case, as at times the musk is discharged through the orifice in the skin. Musk deer much resemble hares in their habits, making forms in the same manner, and generally choosing to feed early in the morning or towards the evening. Their food chiefly consists of young leaves, grass, tender shoots, herbs, berries, grain and moss seeds. The female generally gives birth to twins, which are deposited at some distance from each other, the dam only visiting them at times during the day. Thus are those habits of solitude and retirement engendered which continue through life, for they are rarely seen two together, and the fawns never associate with the dam. Musk deer are found in all kinds of forest, but seldom at lower altitudes than eight thousand feet. The flesh is fine grained.

The gooral, or Himalayan chamois, is a gregarious animal about the size of an ordinary goat, with rough coat about two inches long, of brownish-grey colour, rather lighter under the belly and inside the legs, and white under the throat. Both male and female, which are much alike, have black ringed horns about eight inches long and three and a half in circumference, tapering to a point, and curved backwards. They breed in the end of May, the female rarely having more than one at a birth. Gooral are generally found feeding at dawn and near sunset, lying

under bushes and rocks during the day. They frequent the steepest grass-covered hills and rugged ground, and never forsake a district, however much they may be disturbed. When alarmed they give a peculiar hissing grunt.

The surrow, also a kind of chamois, stands about three feet and a half at the shoulder, and is about five feet and a half long, from the point of the nose to the end of the tail. The general colour of the fur is a reddish-grey, deepening to black on the back, head, and hind-quarters, with yellow and dirty white under the belly and inside the legs, and a light ash muzzle, with a white streak running along the sides of the lower jaw. Having large coarse ears, the expression of the head resembles that of an ass more than a deer, and the legs are thick and clumsily proportioned, occasioning an awkward gait. The male has a black forelock and mane, which he erects when alarmed, and a large and fiery black eye. Both male and female have highly-polished black tapering sharp-pointed horns, about twelve inches long and four inches in circumference at the base, annulated for the first five inches and curved backwards almost on to the neck. The surrow is rather a rare animal, and is generally found in the most inaccessible parts of the forest, in the vicinity of water. He is a dangerous customer for dogs to bring to bay, often killing and maiming several with his horns before being pulled down.

The ibex of the Himalaya takes the foremost place

amongst the varied game of that district, being the largest of the goat species. The male measures forty-two inches in height at the shoulder, and is about five feet in length, including the head. The female is very small in comparison. The horns of the buck vary from three feet to fifty inches in length, and from eight to thirteen inches in circumference; those of the female are round, and rarely exceed a foot in length. The general colour of the buck ibex is a yellowish-grey, with a darker stripe along the centre of the back, ash-coloured muzzle, and black beard about eight inches long. The females and young are uniformly of a reddish-grey colour. The head of the ibex is rounder and the nose shorter than any other of the goat tribe, and the ears are placed further back. Ibex seem little affected by cold, for in the daytime they remain in the most secluded and rugged spots above the limits of vegetation, and in the evening move downwards towards their feeding grounds, which often lie at a great distance. In summer the males separate from the females, and in a body resort to the higher regions, where they may sometimes be met with in troops of fifty.

The burrul or snow sheep, is a gregarious animal, found only upon the loftier ranges. The male stands thirty-eight inches high at the shoulder, and is about four feet and a half in length, often weighing over two hundredweight. The female is scarcely half the size. Their general colour is a light ash with white under the belly; but an old male has also black breast

and points, as well as a narrow stripe between the ash on the upper part of the body and the white of the belly. The horns of the male are about twenty-two inches long by eleven in circumference, and they have a single curve like a ram's, but the reverse way. The female has small flat horns, half the size. Burrul are generally found on the grassy slopes between the limits of the forest and the snow line, and there, in unfrequented regions, they may be seen, several score together, browsing like tame sheep. They are not difficult stalking, except in places where often disturbed, then they become shy and wary. When alarmed they utter a shrill kind of snort, retiring rather leisurely, and stopping at times as if to satisfy their curiosity as to the cause of alarm. They breed in June and July, the males and females associating all the year round, although flocks of young males are occasionally met with in the summer. On the Ladak side of the Himalaya, there is a variety of this species called the Napor.

The thaar, or Himalayan wild goat, a most noble-looking animal, is gregarious, being often found in large flocks. A ram before the rutting season frequently weighs over three hundred pounds, measuring five feet and a half including the head, and forty-six inches at the shoulder. The female is a most inferior-looking animal in comparison with the male, not being one-half the size. The ram is generally of a brownish dun colour, almost deepening to black on the head and points, the neck and shoulders

being furnished with long shaggy hair. The female and young are of a reddish-brown colour, rather lighter under the belly. The thaar has horns about twelve inches long and ten in circumference, curving backwards, with flat sides. Those of the female are smaller.

There are also several species and varieties of game birds peculiar to the range, which merit description. The kaleeje, or black pheasant, I have previously described. The moonal, or blue pheasant (*Lophophorus impeyanus*), is about thirty inches in length and thirty-six across the wings, weighing generally about six pounds. The plumage is most gorgeous; the head being of a dark metallic green crested with long slender feathers, the neck, body and wings a bright iridescent blue, shot with gold under the throat, the long wing feathers glossy black, and the tail, which is fan-shaped, consists of eighteen chestnut-coloured feathers. The bill is curved at the tip, and of a dark horn colour; the iris brown, and round the eye is a naked bluish-coloured skin. The hen is rather smaller than the cock, and in plumage resembles the female of the English breed. Young cocks much resemble the hens in colour, but the plumage is darker, and more strongly marked. The moonal roosts in large trees, but their nests are built on the ground, generally under a bush. The female lays, on an average, five white-and-brown speckled eggs, which are hatched in May. Their food consists of berries, roots, young shoots, grubs, and insects. The

moonial is found at all heights up to the snowy range, and in the spring may be met with in great numbers in the patches of grass on the borders of the forest. They have a loud, plaintive whistle, which is only heard early or late in the day, except in cloudy weather or before a storm, when it may be heard at all hours.

The koklass, or mottled pheasant, is twenty inches in length exclusive of the tail, which is about eight, and thirty inches across the wings. The male has a beautifully variegated game plumage, the body being of a light ash colour barred with a darker shade, and the feathers broad at the base and tapering to a point. The head is a glossy green, somewhat rounded, like that of a blackcock, and the crest is jet black. The bill is black, the iris brown, and the skin round the eye red. The female is of a freckled brown colour; she lays seven eggs somewhat similar to those of the moonial, and hatches them in May, always choosing the most impracticable places to breed in. The koklass are rarely seen at a less elevation than five thousand feet, and are generally found in pairs on the sides of the steepest hills, in the grass and brush under pine forest, and in the most shady and secluded places. They feed much in the same manner as the moonial, early in the morning and towards sunset. Their cry somewhat resembles the word "Kokla-kokla," hence their name.

The cheer, or brown pheasant (*Phasianus wallichii*), is nineteen inches long, exclusive of the tail, which

varies from sixteen to six and twenty, and thirty-two across the wings. The male has a strongly-marked game plumage, the predominant colour of which is ashy dun, each feather being marked with dark brown bars. The head is of a dark ash colour, the feathers of the crest brown, and the tail marked with alternate bars of grey and reddish brown. The beak is a light horn colour, the iris yellow hazel, and the skin round the eye bright red. The plumage of the female much resembles that of the male, the bars not being quite so strongly defined, besides which she is generally rather smaller. Cheer are rarely seen below an elevation of eight thousand feet, and often at twelve thousand. They frequent the grassy slopes and crests of hills covered with oak forest, living on grubs, insects, berries, and roots. They always roost on the ground, and the female lays from ten to fifteen eggs, which are hatched in the beginning of June.

The argus, jewar, or horned pheasant, is the most beautiful as well as the rarest of the pheasant tribes of the Himalaya, being only found in the most secluded recesses of the forest. The cock is thirty inches in length and thirty-eight across the wings. The bill is small and of a black horn colour, the iris blue, and the skin round the eye red. The head is glossy black, the feathers forming a crest tinged with red, and two light-blue horn-like appendages about an inch and a half in length, hung down on each side. Under the throat is a blue and purple

wattle, about three inches long. The neck and breast are bright scarlet, the wing feathers black, and the back and upper part of the body dark brown barred with black, each feather being marked near the end with a round white spot the size of a small pea. The hen is smaller than the cock and has a brown-and-black mottled plumage, the round spots being only distinctly defined on the breast. She has no horns, wattle, or naked skin round the eyes. A young cock is scarcely to be distinguished from the hen the first year, but the second the breast becomes red, and the white spots make their appearance. The call of the argus much resembles the bleating of a kid when separated from its dam. They roost in evergreens of the densest foliage, and the only nest I ever found was on the ground in a patch of ringal, and contained five whitish eggs, irregularly marked with reddish-brown patches or streaks.

The jer-moonal, hûnyâl, or snow pheasant, is the largest of the pheasant tribe, being twenty-nine inches long, forty across the wings, and often weighing over seven pounds when in good condition. The general colour of the plumage is ashy grey, the feathers over the breast being tinged with brown, and the head, which is light ash, has a chestnut bar on each side. The bill is pale yellow, the iris dark brown, and the skin round the eye bright yellow. These birds, which are gregarious, resemble partridges much more than pheasants, and are only

found on rocky ground above the limits of the forest, on the snowy ranges, never entering wood or long grass. When feeding or undisturbed, their call is peculiarly soft and plaintive, but when flushed they utter a sharp shrill whistle, which they continue until they again alight.

The partridges of the Himalaya are the ordinary grey, the francolin, or black partridge, the chickor, (described in a previous chapter), the peura, or hill partridge, and the jet-teetur, or snow partridge.

The peura somewhat resembles the grey partridge of the plains, except that it has no spurs, and is smaller, being about twelve inches in length, and eighteen across the wings. The bill is black, the head chestnut, barred with black; neck, olive streaked with white, and a white circle round the throat; the rest of the body is a mottled chestnut and sienna barred with black. The female is very much like the male, except that she is rather smaller, and has chestnut under the throat instead of white. They feed upon roots, berries, seeds and insects, and are generally found in pairs.

The jer-teetur, or snow partridge, much resembles the snow pheasant both in shape and colour, and is the largest of the partridge species, being sixteen inches in length, and twenty-four across the wings. The bill is bright red, the head and neck grey with black bars, the throat and breast brownish-red streaked with white, and the rest of the body grey, barred with narrow dark streaks. The female is almost as large

as the male, and can scarcely be distinguished, except from its want of spurs. They utter a peculiar whistle when alarmed, and seldom fly far, their flight being heavy, and resembling that of a pheasant. They are generally found on the grassy slopes near the snow, and seldom at lower altitudes. They feed upon moss-seeds and the tender shoots of aromatic herbs, which often gives a peculiar flavour to their flesh, which somewhat resembles grouse. They are almost invariably in good condition and fat.

Woodcock breed in the forest near the snow, and descend to the lower hills in November, returning to the higher regions as the hotter season comes on. Their appearance exactly resembles those found in England, but I think they are rather smaller if anything. Solitary and common snipe are also pretty numerous in places, as well as several varieties of ducks, large white cranes, curlew, and other water fowl.

CHAPTER XXV.

In the cold pale gleam of the evening sun,
Like giant relics of worlds bygone,
See scattered heaps in ruin thrown,
Wild desert shapes of rock and stone.

Chasms of the early world are yawning there,
And rocks are seen, craggy and vast and bare,
And many a dizzy precipice sublime.

THE VALLEY OF THE GANGES AND SACRED SHRINE OF GANGOUTRIE.

The Route.—The Valley of the Ganges.—The Sacred River.—Snow streams.
—Daily marches.—The Kanoolee Hills.—Gooral stalking.—Bear shooting.
—Thaar stalking.—Successful work.—The Hunter's fire.—Difficult travelling.—Changes in the forest.—Wild scenery.—The Brahmin's retreat.—The Jad Gunga.—The Sacred shrine of Gungajee.—Gangoutrie.
—Rudru Himaleh.

GRATIFYING as the magnificent scenery of these almost unknown regions is to the traveller, any very detailed description of daily marching can scarcely be otherwise than monotonous to the reader. I shall therefore simply confine my relation of this expedition to pointing out that which will be most useful to any brother sportsman taking the same route. From Mussoorie we proceeded along the Landour range, through beautifully verdant hills covered with oak and rhododendron, to the sombre-looking valley of

Mugra, where we breakfasted by a perennial spring of remarkable coldness that is well known to most hill sportsmen. Continuing our route through undulating and densely-wooded country, we passed through the small village of Beelee, and after a tramp of four hours arrived at our tent at Phaidee. Total distance, twelve miles.

From Phaidee we crossed the fertile and richly-cultivated valley of the Aglar Gadh, through which flows the river of the same name (a clear, pellucid stream, that takes its rise in the adjacent hills, and debouches into the Jumna), and after a stiff up-hill walk, arrived at Bhalla, where our camp was pitched. Distance, seven miles.

From Bhalla we crossed Jhan-da-gan hills by the Lallari pass (a most fatiguing ascent), to the small village of Lallari, where we breakfasted, and afterwards descended by a steep path, winding along the face of a hill, into the valley of the Nagun Gadh river, which we crossed, and afterwards followed in its course down stream until we came to its debouchure in the Bhageruttee branch of the Ganges. The sacred river here flows through a lovely valley over half a mile in width, thickly sprinkled with villages, and on each side rise ranges of hills some four or five thousand feet high, crowned with beautiful woods of oak, pine, and rhododendron, interspersed with grassy slopes, verdant knolls, and rocky ravines whilst the lower slopes are richly cultivated in terraces. The stream itself is about fifty yards wide

and generally fordable, except in the bends, where there are dark pools of great depth. The current is at all times very strong and rapid, and the water exceedingly cold. At this season of the year the Bhageruttee is almost at its lowest, and the water clear and pellucid, but in March it begins to rise, from the melting of the snow in the higher regions; and in the latter end of June, or beginning of July (the close of the summer and the commencement of the heavy rains), it becomes full, and assumes the proportions of a mighty river, which gradually decreases as the cooler weather comes on. When full, the waters are thick and muddy, from the washings of the mountains and high lands. As a general rule, we found all snow streams lowest in the morning and highest in the evening, which fact is easily accounted for, as it is the intense heat of the sun's rays in the day time that makes the greatest impression upon the snow, and necessarily increases the flow of water; thus, streams that we have crossed almost dry-shod early in the morning *en route* to our shooting-ground, we have been obliged to bridge over on our return to camp in the evening, having found them swift, rolling torrents, dashing along their rocky bed with a roar like thunder. We continued our course along the right bank of the river for about five miles, when we arrived at the village of Burelhee, where we found our tents pitched in a fine mango slope near a ruined pagoda. Total distance, eighteen miles.

From Burelhee we began to ascend the road,

winding along the bank of the river for about a mile, when we crossed the river Gudoul Gadh by a bridge, and passed through the village of Dhurassoo, which is perched upon a rock at the junction of the rivers. The rajah of this place, who is known to be very partial to Europeans, very politely sent us a couple of fatted sheep, half a dozen fine fowls, and several trays of fruit, begging us to excuse his not visiting our camp, on account of his suffering from a severe attack of fever. We took the will for the deed, and accepted his present, which was not to be despised, as we afterwards found provisions and supplies rather scarce; and, sending him some quinine, we promised to visit him on our return. From this we ascended nearly four thousand feet, until we came to the little village of Pettara, from whence we had a magnificent view of the valley, which appeared to be richly cultivated. The river here flows through a narrow gorge for nearly four miles, after which it again opens out, flowing through rice fields. Continually ascending and descending, another four miles' tramp brought us to the village of Dhoonda, which is perched on the summit of a cliff overhanging the bed of the river. Here we visited a three-storied fortalice, somewhat resembling a martello tower, which in troubled times served the inhabitants as a refuge, cattle being kept in the lower story, grain in the second, and the third, which was loop-holed, being the residence of the garrison. Between two jutting rocks overhanging the river is a jula bridge.

From Dhoonda the river winds through a richly-cultivated country, and, still following the right bank, we waded the Ruthore river, crossed the Barette by a sango, and arrived at Barahaat, our halting-place, at an early hour. Distance, twelve miles. Here we visited the Sook-ke-Mundoor pagoda, where we were shown the celebrated brass trident covered with strange hieroglyphics, which is said to be a relic left by the Tartars, who once held possession of the country.

From Barahaat our route, which still lay along the right bank of the Ganges, led us through the village of Lachajoaroo, where we visited temples dedicated to Siva and Doorgah, and afterwards, crossing the Reena and two other small rivers, passed through the little villages of Innoo and Incolla, which bore traces of having been much more considerable places in former days, as on all sides were vestiges of cultivation, which now to a great extent appeared neglected. Towards noon we arrived at Reithul, where we put up in a comfortable house belonging to a Buniar, or grain dealer. Distance, thirteen miles. In the evening we strolled through some beautiful oak forest, and in patches of ringal, with the aid of my dogs, flushed numbers of kaleege and moonal pheasants, of which we managed to bag several brace.

From Reithul we passed through the villages of Mathal, Palu, and Teear, crossed the Elgoo nullah and the Ganganee river, and put up at Bengalee, a small village at the foot of the Kanoolee hill, which is a spur from the high ridge of mountains that

divides the valleys of the Ganges and the Jumna. Distance, eleven miles.

Here we resolved to halt a few days for thaar shooting, and, leaving our heavy baggage at the village, under charge of the peon and some of our people, we engaged a villager who knew the ground, and started up the southern face of the hill, carrying only our small tents, bedding, and provisions. The slope was clothed with beautiful forests of chestnut, walnut, and oak, varied with green patches and rocky ground, and as we went along the dogs put up a brace of woodcocks and several moonals; but they were allowed to go unscathed, lest the report of our guns might disturb more valued game. We pitched our tents under the shelter of some noble oaks, by a beautiful purling stream, rather more than half-way up the hill, which rises about seven thousand feet above the valley; and then Fred and I, leaving the Doctor to superintend the culinary arrangements, set out with the villager and Chineah to reconnoitre the ground.

It being so early in the season, the haunts of the thaar had not been disturbed for some time, so we had every reason to expect good sport. After passing through a belt of moura oak we came to some rocky ground, where we found numerous fresh slots and traces, but no thaar; so we crept along some very awkward-looking places to the east face, and gained a grassy slope, where we found several gooral feeding. Desiring our people to lie down and remain quiet, Fred and I made a circuit, and gained the cover of a

rock within a hundred yards of the game, from whence we should have had an easy pot-shot right and left, when, just as we were about to fire, a brace of cheer pheasants got up, with a whirr, from almost under our feet, and gave the alarm. With a snort somewhat between a hiss and a whistle, they all made a sudden rush, and we had only time for a couple of snap-shots each as they bounded up the slope at speed; one, a young male, rolled over paralyzed, with his spine broken; and a female, which went off with the rest, was observed to lag behind, and then lie down. Having reloaded, we crept towards her as noiselessly as possible, but on our approach she regained her legs, and would most likely have got away had not Fred again fired, and dropped her with a bullet through the neck. Having gralloched the game, we were returning to camp, when we saw a couple of large yellow bears bowling along a piece of rugged ground a couple of hundred yards below us. As they were coming up-hill in our direction we got behind a clump of rhododendron bushes, which afforded excellent cover, and awaited their approach. They travelled slowly, being engaged in turning over stones as they went along to look for insects, which search could not have proved very satisfactory, for they came up grunting and moaning, as if in very bad-humour with each other, offering splendid shots. We let drive almost simultaneously, and both shots were effective, for the male dropped without a movement, whilst the female, rearing up on her hind-legs,

with a grunt betokening surprise, fell sprawling on her back in the last agony. We rushed up to give the *coup de grace*, but it was not required—both were dead. Having reloaded our rifles, we continued our route towards the camp, leaving the operation of skinning until the morrow, as we did not care to lose our dinners, and pass the night in the bush—the natural consequence of being overtaken by darkness in these regions. As it was, we arrived late, for “Five Minutes,” fearful lest the dinner should be spoiled by waiting, was heard some time before we arrived at the tents venting his spleen upon the “unchaste *janwars*” (beasts) that caused our delay. Such being the case, little unnecessary time was now lost, and with appetites sharpened by our fag, we did ample justice to the good cheer. After having talked over our sport, and given directions that some of the people should go and fetch the skins of the bears in the morning, we cleaned out our arms, which were again carefully loaded, in case of accidents, and turned in.

The next morning, at daybreak, we all started in different directions to look for thaar, taking our breakfasts with us. I was accompanied by Chineah, carrying a spare gun, and a couple of coolies to carry back any game I might kill. After several hours’ fag, during which I traversed several likely-looking patches of oak forest without seeing anything but an occasional moonal pheasant, which I would not fire at for fear of disturbing other game, just as I was thinking of making my way back to the tent empty-

handed, a herd of five thaar was discovered browsing on the grassy slope of a little ravine some distance below us. With the aid of my glass, I made them out to be all males, with long shaggy hair streaming in the wind. Having carefully marked the spot, which appeared extremely favourable for stalking, I made my people lie down, and, slinging my second gun over my shoulder, commenced the descent, taking care to keep well to leeward. Creeping noiselessly down, I succeeded in gaining a long, low ridge, which ran parallel to the hollow in which I had marked them, and, looking cautiously over, there they were still, unsuspectingly feeding, not more than sixty paces distant. Selecting the one that appeared to have the finest horns, I took a steady aim just behind the shoulder, and he dropped to the shot; my second barrel brought another fine fellow floundering on the ground with a bullet through his loins that passed out of the opposite shoulder. The three survivors, startled at the report of my rifle, rushed forward a few paces, and then turned and stood, as if bewildered, giving me another fair double shot with my second gun. I rolled over a third dead with a bullet through the neck, and broke the leg of a fourth, which, however, went off at a good pace. Elated with my success, I reloaded, and, leaving the game to be collected by the coolies, set off in pursuit of the wounded animal. I was soon on the trail, which, being plentifully sprinkled with blood, showed that the quarry was hard hit, and I had no difficulty in

following it up. After a quarter of an hour's tracking, I came upon the wounded thaar lying down in some low bush. He was so weak from loss of blood that he could hardly stand, much more get away, for the bullet, besides breaking his hind-leg, had entered into the body ; and I despatched him with my hunting-knife.

Leaving one cooly in charge of the game, and despatching the other to the camp for assistance to carry it, I was strolling leisurely along in the direction of our bivouac, when a fine male musk deer started up from almost under our feet. I let drive right and left, but missed with both barrels, when Chineah, giving me my second gun, I managed to roll him over with my third shot as he was bounding away through the long grass. Musk deer hunting is very pretty sport, and the best practice the sportsman can have to test his shooting, as the game offers a very small mark and bounds along with incredible swiftness. After taking out the pod, which must have contained nearly an ounce weight of musk, Chineah slung the deer over his shoulders, and we made the best of our way to the tents, where we found the Doctor busily engaged in skinning and preserving a beautiful specimen of the argus, or horned pheasant, which he had killed high up in the mountain. This was the only shot he had fired, for although he had seen a flock of several gooral, they were so wild that he could not get near them. Towards sunset Fred returned, having killed a fine old male thaar, and two



Painted by E. S. S. S.

" THE SPEAR WON . "

musk deer, besides wounding a bear, which escaped by taking refuge in a cave. After dinner we all assembled round the camp-fire, to discuss the events of the day and our hopes for the morrow. Since that evening long years have rolled, yet it is not forgotten. Four head of thaar bagged in four consecutive shots made it a red-letter day in my calendar. Since then both my merry companions have passed away on their last journey. Fred, as no doubt he would have best chosen, for in fair battle his noble heart was stilled, and face to face with the foe his strong arm fell nerveless; whilst the Doctor, also cut off in the performance of his duty, fell a victim to that insidious scourge of India, cholera. Yet the last of the trio, who has also battled against the same chances, has been permitted to return, like a ship to its old moorings, and after having been beaten about by all weathers and the storms of many latitudes, is still to the fore, though not unscathed by fire and shot, for the future to be laid up in ordinary, or perhaps to remain close in shore. That night was one strongly engrafted on my memory, for the Doctor told us, by snatches, of all his wanderings and history, interspersed with many an anecdote of man and beast, and it was not until a late hour that we thought of turning in.

The next day we changed our camp, moving about three miles towards the east face, which was said to be the best ground for thaar, and here we remained four days, enjoying fair sport, killing between us

three snow bears, eight thaar, five gooral, two burrul, seven musk deer and a scrow. After this, we descended the hill and returned to Bengalee, where we halted a day to rest and prepare some of the specimens, which we sent by a cooly to Fred's quarters at Dehra.

From Bengalee the river flows through a narrow gorge with steep precipitous cliffs on each side, and here a sure foot and a steady eye became absolutely necessary, for the path was extremely rough, often steep, and in some places wound so closely round the scarps of precipices as to render travelling dangerous. After crossing the Kanoulee or Cedar Gadh by a sango, we had to clamber along a narrow ledge cut out of the face of the cliff, with a fearful abyss below, and the scarped rock above; and scarcely had we surmounted this difficulty, than we had to pass over shaky plank platforms, that trembled under foot as we walked, and rickety flights of wooden and stone steps, fastened to beams driven in fissures and crevices in the rock, hanging several hundred feet above the river that was dashing along its contracted narrow channel with an almost deafening roar. Here the bed of the river in many places was strewn with huge blocks of rock which had fallen from the cliffs above, and some of these were so large that they obstructed the course of the stream, and added not a little to the turbulence which the rapidity of its descent necessarily occasioned. After some distance the valley opened out, and we crossed and recrossed the Ganges

several times, seeking the most practicable paths. Four large mountain torrents, the Dangalee, Dubrape, Loarnad, and Rindee Gadh, join the Ganges from the left bank, and have to be crossed by sangos. Almost opposite the half-ruined village of Sookree, which is situated on the right bank by the side of a ravine running down from the Kanda-ke-Dhar mountain, is a wooden bridge, suspended on two overhanging rocks, and here the valley again contracts rather suddenly, forming a narrow gorge, in which there is only just room for the river to pass. After a four hours' tramp, we arrived at the little village of Jhala, which is situated on the right bank at the foot of the Dhum-dhara range. Distance, fourteen miles.

From Jhala, the course of the river which up to this time had led almost north, now took an easterly direction, and, consequent upon the increased altitude, a great change was observable in the appearance of the forest. Cedars, yews, cypress, cheel, morenda, and rye pines, with underwood of red and black currant and raspberry bushes, now took the place of oak, whilst the rhododendron appeared stunted and small. The valley decreased in width as we advanced, whilst the cliffs on each side became so precipitous that it required no great stretch of imagination to conceive that at one time the sacred stream must have burst, or riven asunder its subterranean bed and rent the fissure in the solid rock through which it flows. Indeed, there were places where I fancied

that I could even trace the same inclination of strata on both faces of the precipices, with prominences on the one side, and corresponding cavities on the other, which seemed to substantiate my theory that the mass had been rent by some violent convulsion. Both my companions coincided with me in this opinion, and the Doctor recalled to mind and repeated Coleridge's admirable simile on broken friendship :—

“ They parted—ne’er to meet again ;
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder.
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall ever do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once had been.”

The chasm was extremely narrow in comparison with its depth, in some places being less than forty feet in width, whilst the height of the cliffs could not have been less than three hundred feet. It much reminded me of that part of the Hinter Rhein designated “ Das verlorene Loch,” or the ravine of the Tamima, although it exceeded either in its stern wild character. The sides of the ravine were generally too steep and bare to sustain vegetation, yet in many places they were furrowed by gullies and channels worn by mountain torrents and snow streams, which were almost invariably clothed with dark pine forest, and sometimes an elevated plateau or ledge, formed by a projecting strata, covered with living verdure, would present the appearance of hanging woods, and somewhat soften the stern severity of the scene. As we

were picking our way along a toilsome path encumbered with *débris* of all kinds that had fallen from above, the villager who acted as our guide pointed out to us one of those apparently inaccessible spots jutting out from the overhanging face of the rock, some hundreds of feet above the bed of the river, that had the appearance of having at one time been tenanted by man, as, besides pines and a few large cedars, I noticed a row of cypress trees, that looked as if they had been planted at regular intervals. This ledge he said had formerly been the retreat of a very holy Gossein, who having devoted himself to the service of Mahadeo, became so much disgusted with his fellow-men that he attempted self-destruction by throwing himself into the Ganges; but the god whom he worshipped, taking the shape of a Brahminy kite, caught him as he fell, and bore him to that ledge of rock, where he lived for many years on food brought up to him by birds, until, having become purified by penance, he was absorbed and incarnated in the divinity itself. Our path, which was often very imperfectly indicated, lay for a considerable distance over tracts covered with loose rocks and angular boulders, which appeared clean and sharp-edged, as if they had been newly quarried, with scarcely a particle of intervening mould or a trace of vegetation; and as we went along we frequently came across hummocks and abrupt elevations, which owed their origin to land-slips from the cliffs above. These chiefly take place in the cold season, when the water

(caused by the melting of the snows in the summer months) that has penetrated into the fissures and crevices of the cliffs, becoming congealed by the frost, expands in volume, and rends the live rock asunder with irresistible force, hurling masses hundreds of tons in weight down the face of the precipice, and strewing the valley below with fragments and *débris*.

Continuing our way along the right bank below the snow-clad Deo-goojar, we crossed the Shean-Gadh by a sango where the gorge opens out, and the Ganges divides into several shallow streams that flow along a bed of shingles and sand, and passing the confluence of the Ghoomtee and Hersula Gunga, which are separated from each other by a narrow ledge of lofty rocks, we passed over to the left or southern bank, forded the Keeree, and several other tributary streams that take their rise among the high snow-covered mountains of the Jaunli range, and after traversing a magnificent forest of deodars, some of which were of gigantic proportions, halted at Derallee, where our camp was pitched in an apricot orchard. Distance, eight miles. As this is the highest village in the valley of the Ganges, we resolved to make it a temporary base of operations, and left the large tent standing, and a portion of our people in charge of our heavier baggage, which we had found extremely difficult to transport thus far. Indeed, it was wonderful to see the little Puharee coolies get along with their loads over such ground,

passing as they did through rapid mountain-streams of ice-cold water, or across beds of torrents, slippery rocks, perilous bridges, and steep descents, without the slightest hesitation. Here we visited three small temples as well as two extraordinary six-storied houses, one in the village and the other on a rock above, that were built by one of the earlier Teeree rajahs for the accommodation of Brahmin pilgrims.

From Derallee, accompanied only by our shekarries, and eight of the coolies carrying two small hill tents and provisions, we wound along the bed of the Ganges for some miles, passing through magnificent cedar forests, until we came to the junction of the Jad-Gunga or Jhannevie-Gadh, a tributary fully as large as the sacred stream itself, which takes its rise in the mountains of Thibet, above Neilung, to the north east. Both rivers run in deep, rocky gorges that appear to have been worn by the action of the water, and at their confluence an immense precipitous cliff, fringed with verdure, towers high into the sky and overhangs both streams. The view from the bed of the river where we bathed, near the junction of the streams, was singularly wild and grand. Just above this spot, at the base of another steep descent, where the Ganges dashes down a chasm of rock about forty feet wide, and perhaps a hundred and twenty deep, is the shaky old bridge of Byramghattee, that was built by one of the Teeree rajahs many years ago. After leaving this relic of ancient days, a couple of hours' hard walking brought us to the confluence of

the Meanee-Gadh, a rapid mountain torrent, that takes its rise in the Meanee-teeba range, the northern spurs of which form the lateral banks of the valley. From this point the ascent became very steep, the river forcing its passage almost unseen in a succession of rapids down a dark and narrow chasm, in many places more than three hundred feet deep, that seemed to have been cleft in the solid rock along the centre of a winding gorge. On each side of this precipitous channel is a slope, varying from a hundred yards to half a mile in breadth, well wooded with pine and cedar, whilst above this again rise steep lateral cliffs, fringed with pine and birch, that for the most part were covered with snow. After some hours' scrambling along a steep and tortuous track, during which time we crossed many a deep watercourse furrowed in the sides of the mountain, we came to the junction of the Keedar Gunga (the first contributory stream of any size that joins the Ganges) which takes its rise in the lofty range to the southward. Here the sacred river glides over a huge mass of rock forming a series of cascades, and above this the channel widens, the gorge entirely disappears, gentle slopes clothed with verdant woods come quite down to the water's edge, and the stream is seen rolling swiftly over a broad bed of shingle.

On the right bank, about fifteen feet above the stream, upon a slab of rock (that is held to be sacred as the spot upon which Gunga used to worship Mahadeo) is a small unpretending square pagoda, with

melon-shaped roof, scarcely twelve feet high, surrounded by a low wall of unhewn stone. Although this insignificant-looking edifice is scarcely to be seen until the traveller comes close upon it, he must not pass it by unheeded, for he now stands before the celebrated temple of Gangoutrie, the holiest and most revered shrine of Hindoo worship, and the supposed abode of the goddess Gunga or Bhagiruttee, the spirit of the sacred Ganges. On entering the little courtyard that is paved with smooth stones taken from the bed of the river, another small temple is seen, which is dedicated to Byramjee. Both are said to have been built by the Ghoorka chief, Ummer Singh, when he subdued this part of the country.

Although, from its extreme inaccessibility, man has done so little to mark a spot that is revered and considered holy by more than a hundred millions of his race, Nature has done much, and the utter desolation and strangely stern wildness of the place is worthy of the mysterious sanctity with which it is regarded ; indeed, it is scarcely possible to describe the scene, or to convey an adequate idea of the undefinable sensation of reverence that steals over the mind whilst contemplating it. Scarped, overhanging cliffs, fringed with dark pines, and splintered crags of fantastic shape, tower so high, that only a small strip of sky is visible over head, and close up the view on every side except towards the east, where the five large peaks of Rudru-Himaleh rise, forming a semi-circular hollow down which a huge glacier rolled.

The appearance of this mountain from Gangoutrie, as seen through the vista of the valley, was most striking, for it seemed like a mighty barrier of snow, that closed up the head of the gorge, whilst the contrast of its dazzling whiteness with the deep-blue sky above, and the dark, stern cliffs on each side, gave it a character almost artificial. In such scenes the mind often wanders from the real to the ideal, and for the moment I fancied I was standing before some enormous stage, the proportions of which were so immense, that nothing short of Titans, or the giants that fought against Mahadeo, could have played appropriate parts, nor was music wanting to complete the simile; for the rushing of the torrent, the rolling of the shingle on the bed of the river, the murmuring of cascades, which rose and fell as if the waters were advancing or retiring, and the mournful sighing of the wind as it swept through numerous rocky gorges, formed a strangely wild melody appropriate to the sombre grandeur of the scene.

Our tent was pitched on a little clearing close to the river, and our people found shelter in one of the numerous caves excavated in the face of the rock for the use of pilgrims to the shrine. The head Brahmin, induced by the offer of a few rupees, showed us through the temple; but there was little to be seen in the Holy of Holies, the great object of adoration being a small silver image, supposed to represent the goddess Gunga, before which a few oil lights are continually kept burning. Having satisfied our

curiosity, and distributed our largess, we adjourned to dinner, after which we were present at certain ceremonies and dances performed by our people and some villagers to propitiate the spirit of the waters, and induce her to bring good luck upon our expedition. Having finished our part of the performance, which was to distribute a few rupees, we had an interesting chat round the fire, and turned in for the night.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ There’s a lofty realm where the lightnings play,
And the avalanche rolls on its fateful way,
Where the glaciers crack and the landslips fall,
And snow-wastes cover the earth like a pall.”

THE SOURCE OF THE GANGES, AND THE GREAT GLACIERS OF RUDRU HIMALEH.

Early morning.—The start.—Musk-deer.—Wild scenery.—Difficult travelling.—Burrul shooting.—A snow-leopard killed.—More sport.—A grand view.—Rudru Himaleh.—Burrul stalking.—A snap-shot.—Game afoot.—Successful work.—The bivouac.—The appearance of the great glacier from the valley.—The Cow’s Mouth.—The source of the Ganges.—An adventure with snow-bears.—Preparations for Glacier-land.—The appearance of the glacier.—Crevasses.—Obstacles in travelling.—Sunrise on the mountains.—The head of the glacier.—The chasm of the Ganges.—Ice caves.—A storm.—A dangerous position.—The shelter.—Avalanches and landslips.—Intense cold.—Our bivouac at a high altitude.—The return.

THE next morning early I opened the door of the tent without disturbing my sleeping companions, and looked out into the night. The gorge was still in darkness, for although the moon was shining brightly, the high lateral mountains intercepted her rays, and cast a deep shade below. The air felt cool and bracing, but not a leaf stirred, which was most favourable for effective stalking, as the taint in the air caused by man’s presence is carried on the wind to almost incredible distances, and is immediately

detected by the denizens of the mountains, whose organs of scent are most keenly developed. All was still save the rushing of the waters, and not a sound denoted the existence of animal life save that indescribable low hum, or soft murmur of the invisible insect world, which ever greets the hunter's ears in the early morning.

Having satisfied myself that we had every prospect of fine weather for our expedition, I bade the man who was on the look-out to rouse the people, and in a few moments we all assembled round a blazing fire. Having partaken of a substantial breakfast, and superintended the packing of our baggage, we lighted our cheroots, and waited until there was sufficient light to distinguish our way, when we shouldered our rifles and set out for the glacier, distant eighteen miles. We kept an extended line whenever the nature of the ground permitted, and beat the most likely-looking patches of forest for musk-deer, of which there were numerous fresh traces. Fred got a couple of shots, and managed to bag a fine old buck with a pod that weighed over an ounce. I might have had a fair shot had I been prepared, for one started up from behind a bush within easy gun-shot whilst I was fastening up my gaiter, but before I could raise my rifle it bounded away out of sight.

The scenery was very wild, our route lying through a narrow gorge, down which the river dashed in a granite chasm, often forming a series of cascades, whilst now and again lofty snow peaks

were seen towering high above the castellated masses of rock that crested the bleak and rugged mountains. Although the general nature of the valley altered very little, a great change was observable in the appearance of the forest; white birch, silver firs, dwarf rhododendron, with strongly-scented leaves, and juniper, became the prevailing trees; pines becoming scarce, and cedars having entirely disappeared. The route up stream became much steeper, and very difficult; sometimes we had to scramble over an immense accumulation of loose *débris* covered with soft snow, often clambering over boulders of rock, or along narrow ledges; again, we had frequently to cross the river on natural snow bridges, which offered very precarious footing, and a false step would have precipitated the traveller two hundred feet into the roaring abyss below.

Notwithstanding the numerous obstacles *en route*, we had excellent sport as we advanced, twice falling in with burrul on the grass-covered slopes of the hill sides; and here I was very successful, for I killed two, right and left, and broke the leg of a third, which, however, got away, whilst two others were bagged by my companions. I also succeeded in stalking a snow leopard, which had evidently been following the burrul, and knocked him over by a lucky shot through the head, as he was stealing away over some craggy ground some two hundred yards distant. It proved a beautiful specimen, the fur being very soft and close, having a whitish ground

with dark spots. These animals are very cunning, and, notwithstanding their traces are often seen on the snowy ranges, comparatively few are bagged.

Whilst I was performing the operation of skinning the leopard, and my companions were breaking up the other game, Chineah espied something moving on a grassy patch in a ravine high up amongst the rocks on the left bank, and with the aid of my glass I made out a large flock of burrul, some of which were lying down, and the others quietly grazing. It was of no use, I knew, approaching them from below, as the ground was unfavourable for stalking, and we should have stood no chance of getting within range without being perceived ; so we arranged that Fred should creep along through the birch forest and clamber up the hill on the further side, whilst the Doctor and I should try and get above on the near side, so as to take them on both flanks.

After a careful reconnaissance of their position, we crept noiselessly upwards, keeping our bodies bent as low as possible, so as not to attract their attention, and by dint of hard climbing, often on all fours, in rather less than two hours we emerged from out of the birch forest, and, traversing a belt of stunted juniper bushes half covered with snow, reached the rocky crest of the hill, breathless and faint from continued exertion. Throwing ourselves down on a smooth slab of rock, to rest and regain our steadiness, previous to approaching the burrul, our attention was drawn to the magnificence of the panorama then

before us, and for a time we gazed spell-bound. Before us lay the glacier world, with its interminable barriers of eternal snow, peak upon peak, rising one behind another in endless succession. From the valley, on account of the steepness and close proximity of its boundaries, little was to be seen except a narrow strip of sky above; but from the elevation we had now attained, which the Doctor made out to be nearly 15,000 feet above the level of the sea, and about 4000 above the bed of the river, the scene was grand beyond conception. Rising above an unbroken girdle of perpetual snow, seventeen peaks seemed to pierce the heavens, the lowest of which exceeded 20,000 feet in elevation. Most conspicuous, from its colossal proportions, was the mighty Soomeroo Purbut, or Rudru Himaleh, with its five majestic peaks towering high against the deep cerulean firmament. They rise in a semicircle facing the south-west, and from where we stood appeared to form an immense amphitheatre filled with eternal snow, in which the Ganges has its primary source. Here the Brahmins say Mahadeo sits enthroned in supreme majesty, clouds, mists, and impassable wastes of eternal snow, forming a barrier inaccessible to aught of mortal birth. They believe that the god formed the Himalaya for his habitation, and Soomeroo Purbut for his retreat, after he was obliged to quit Lunka, or Ceylon, on account of the rebellion of his son Rawen. The five peaks are Rudroo Himaleh (21,009), to the east; Soorga Roomce (21,493 feet), to the west; and

Burrumpooree, Bissenpooree, and Ood-gurree-kanta, whose altitudes are not yet measured, in the background. The glacier, which was said to be only six miles distant, was hidden from our sight by a projecting spur from the adjacent hill. The other peaks that chiefly attracted our attention, as much by their variety of form as their enormous height, were the Himaleh Bahn, an isolated column of scarped rock 12,000 feet high, the crest of which is covered with eternal snow; St. George, 21,256; St. Andrew, 20,428; St. Patrick, 21,392; the Pyramid, 20,060, to the eastward; Mount Moriah, 21,386; Gog, 21,639; Magog, 20,279; and nine other peaks, names unknown, of the Jaunli and Badrinath ranges, to the southward. Rising over the dark tops of a long range of intervening ridges towards the west, rose a barrier of intensely white snowy peaks, which one of the Puharees informed me was the Bunderpouch, over Jumnautrie, the source of the Jumna. Although the distance to some of these peaks from where we stood must have exceeded forty miles as the crow flies, yet the air was so transparent that their outlines were most clearly and sharply defined. From this point we had a very extensive view of the valley of the Ganges, now and then getting a glimpse of the river itself, as, like a silver thread, at a vast depth below us, it wound along from the east, and then took a southerly direction towards the plains. The general character of the valley is that of a grand ravine bounded by two precipices of almost vertical

rocks, sometimes with only sufficient space between for the windings of the river, and at others opening out to a mile in breadth.

But it was time to look after the burrul. Having regained our breath, we examined our rifles, and stole quietly forward along the crest of the hill. We had not gone many yards, our footsteps scarcely making any noise over the crisp snow, when Chineah, who was a couple of paces in front, stopped short, and made a sign to attract our attention; a slight rustling was heard, and in an instant there was a rushing sound on the opposite side of a ridge of rocks like that of an animal bounding away at full speed.

There goes our game. "Is it not provoking?—after such a fag, too!" exclaimed the Doctor, in a subdued voice; and he was pressing forward, when I thought I heard a second movement, and made a gesture for him to keep still—another moment, and I perceived the horns, head, and black breast of an old ram peering inquisitively over a narrow ridge of rock, not fifty yards from where we were standing. To fling up my rifle and press the trigger was the work of a second, but when the smoke cleared away nothing was to be seen.

"Cleanly missed, by Jove!" cried the Doctor, as a shrill snort, followed by a trampling of feet was distinctly heard on the other side of the crest, and for a moment I thought I had made a mess of it. Not so Chineah: he insisted the animal was hit; and so it proved, for, on running up to the spot, there was

a fine full-grown ram stone dead, the bullet having entered the skull right between the eyes. The rest of the herd galloped away in the direction of the ravine where we had marked burrul in the first instance, and on the other side of which Fred had gone to take post. As they had not seen us I did not think they would go very far, so we pressed on after them, and at last arrived at the edge of the slope, when, by craning over, we saw a herd of at least forty burrul grazing undisturbed on the grassy flats below us. Where now was Fred? Ensconcing ourselves behind some rocks, which served as a screen, we waited impatiently his approach. At last I saw three moving figures in clear relief against the sky on the opposite hill—it was Fred and his two shekarries. I watched him with my telescope, cautiously creeping along the broken ground, rifle in hand, prepared for anything, and halting every now and then to sweep the ground with his glass. Perceiving from his movements that he could not see the flock from where he was, I stepped back a few paces, and fastening a handkerchief to my ramrod, made the signal that “game was afoot,” which was instantly understood and answered. Fred, with the precaution of an old sportsman, now sent one of his people along the hill at the entrance of the gorge, so as to drive back the herd in case they should break in that direction, whilst I did the same on my side, and then leaving the Doctor, I posted myself at the head of the ravine. Hardly had I reached it, than I

heard a couple of shots from Fred, and the reports were still reverberating among the rocks when the Doctor also let drive right and left, and I saw the flock scatter in all directions, as if puzzled to know from what point the danger threatened. Again Fred's rifle cracked, and a magnificent old ram that was leading half-a-dozen females, plunged suddenly forward, regained his legs a moment, and then dropped. Again there was a confused hurrying to and fro, a gathering as if for consultation, then the whole herd burst into a gallop, and disappeared over the crest some distance below the spot where the Doctor was posted, and in a few moments I saw them dashing across a distant hill miles away with undiminished speed. As matters turned out, I did not get a shot, for I did not care to fire at random among the herd, which was my only chance; but my companions had no reason to complain, for Fred killed one outright, and wounded a second, which was bagged after a long chase and several more shots; whilst the Doctor killed one, and wounded another, which got away. Our game being collected, and gralloched, was much heavier than we could carry, so we had to leave two men in charge whilst we made the best of our way to the rest of our people, whom we left in the valley, and sent coolies to fetch it.

As it was now too late to think of continuing our march, we determined to bivouac under the cover of a patch of pine forest which offered some shelter.

Our scouting tents were soon pitched, a shanty constructed, and a huge fire lighted, round which we assembled, for as the sun declined the evening became chilly. We were very well contented with our day's sport, having killed a musk-deer, a snow-leopard, three male burrul, and four females—a bag which has rarely been equalled in one day by any three guns. The next morning, as some of us felt rather stiff—the effects of the severe fog the day previous—we turned out later than usual, and striking camp at noon, continued our journey up stream. The walking became very toilsome, for we had to pass over several ravines and watercourses half-hidden with snow, which often gave way under our weight, and occasioned awkward falls. Crossing over to the right bank, we kept along a grass-covered flat, well known as a famous feeding-ground for burrul, and here we saw two flocks, out of which Fred and I, by judicious stalking, each managed to kill a couple; whilst the Doctor gave chase to a huge snow bear that was rooting up herbs on the slope below, and which Fred and I must have passed within fifty yards without perceiving. Bruin was so intent upon his work that he allowed our companion to get within thirty paces before he got wind of him, when leaving off eating the herbage, he cocked his ears back, growled, and made a sudden rush forward, as if indignant at being disturbed. The Doctor, in nowise discomposed at this demonstration, which was evidently intended to intimidate, threw up his rifle

and took a steady shot, aiming between his eyes, but (the first sight* of his rifle being cut for a hundred yards instead of flush with the barrel) the ball struck too high, and merely grazed the forehead, and ploughed up the skin of the back. This made the bear vicious, and with a savage roar he came straight at his antagonist, who was luckily standing on the higher ground. The charge up hill impeded his movements, so the Doctor had time for a second fair shot, and stopped him in mid career with a bullet in his chest, which rolled him over stone dead. This bear had evidently only lately left his winter quarters, for he was very thin and emaciated, a perfect bag of bones. Having left two of our men to take the skin, we continued our route and at last came to the glacier, which at first sight appeared like a huge embankment or barrier of snow, extending right across the valley there nearly three-quarters of a mile broad. In perpendicular height it might have been two hundred feet, although in places the accumulation of *débris* and terminal moraine made it appear less.

At the base of the glacier is the tunnel-like chasm called the Cow's Mouth, through which the Ganges issues forth, no insignificant sub-glacial stream, but already a swift flowing river about fifty feet wide and three deep. In the hot weather the volume of

* A most stupid mistake that all gunmakers, who are not themselves sportsmen, invariably make, and which is often the cause of accidents. In the jungle more game is bagged within fifty yards than above that distance, consequently all rifles ought to have a flush back-sight.

waters is increased fourfold from the melting of the snow on the mountains above. Clambering up the boulders of rock and *débris* that had been carried down by the glacial action, we got upon the glacier, from whence we had a glorious view of the gigantic Rudru Himaleh, with its summit wreathed in fleecy clouds. With the exception of the glacier itself, which appeared to stretch upwards for several miles with a gradual ascent towards the summit of the mountain, the general character of the valley seemed but little changed, for as far as the eye could see on either side, glistening snow-clad hills rose ten or twelve thousand feet, confining the view. The boiling point of water gave an elevation of nearly thirteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, an altitude much greater than any of the Swiss glaciers. After the Doctor had completed his observations, and we had gazed our fill at the solemn grandeur of the scenery, which seemed to impress the mind with a sense of calm repose, we descended from the glacier and retraced our steps about three miles to a patch of pine, under the shelter of which our people had prepared our bivouac. A blazing fire and a substantial dinner were awaiting us, very requisite comforts in these regions, and after having resuscitated the "inner man," we held our usual consultation, at which it was determined that the morrow should be devoted to an exploring expedition up the great glacier. Preparations were commenced accordingly, alpen-stocks, light silken ropes, and my

portable bridge were got out ; kiltas of provisions packed, and half-a-dozen of our stoutest followers told off to accompany us. Fred undertook the arrangements of the victualling department. The Doctor occupied himself in carefully stowing his instruments for ascertaining altitudes, &c., whilst I saw to the general equipment of the party.

These matters settled, after a smoke and a hot brew of Glenlivet, we wrapped ourselves up in our blankets and slept the sleep of the just.

Early dawn saw us up and equipped for our arduous enterprise, and after a substantial breakfast, we started for the glacier, which we reached before the sun had made his appearance from behind the distant mountains. Several of our people had accompanied us up to this point, carrying the stores, &c., so as to spare the exploring party as much as possible ; and I gave orders to those left behind to build a shanty in a sheltered place near the foot of the glacier, and to collect a large quantity of wood, and prepare a bivouac against our return in the evening. This precautionary measure saved our party a fatiguing tramp of three miles, when we returned, almost worn-out and exhausted, in the evening.

The surface of the glacier presented a constant succession of wave-like undulations, or rather of narrow ridges, separated one from another by deep hollows, in which we found crevasses, fissures, and sometimes pools or wells of clear, pellucid, blue water that we could not fathom with a line a hun-

dred yards long. Every part was more or less studded with enormous angular boulders of rock, some of which were fifty feet in height, and different kinds of *débris* that had evidently been carried down from the mountain above. They were of all shapes and sizes, and amongst them I noticed grey, red, and black granite, several kinds of marble, a peculiar white, hard, fine-grained micaceous stone, schist, serpentine, laminated quartz, and very rich copper and iron ore. Some appeared as if they had been freshly quarried, the edges being sharp, whilst others looked as if they were honeycombed by long exposure to the weather, and the sides facing the sun were covered with yellow, green, or black lichen. The colour of the surface of the glacier varied in every direction, sometimes presenting a pale sea-green hue, at others blue and purple of every shade, dirty-white, grey, and here and there black. The different formations of the ice were very extraordinary. In some places were numberless fantastically-shaped pinnacles, and sharp peaks of translucent bluish-green ice, which reflected beautiful prismatic colours in the bright rays of the sun, and in others huge dome-like masses, that in the distance looked like the ruins of ancient Saracenic buildings.

We experienced much difficulty in crossing some of the widest crevasses, and my portable bridge was in constant requisition; indeed, if we had not brought it with us, much time would have been lost in unavoidable circumambulation, and searching for

narrow places which we could leap, or natural ice-bridges; whereas, with its aid we were enabled to direct our course almost as the crow flies. It was not, however, easy travelling, as in places we found the ice extremely slippery, and whilst descending some of the steeper slopes, it was a difficult matter to retain our footing, even with the aid of our iron-shod alpenstocks. When we commenced our journey, the highest ridges and summits of the mountains on each side, as well as the head of the glacier, were covered with an impenetrable veil of dense white mist, heaving and surging about like a tempest-tost sea, which prevented our distinguishing their outline, or indeed anything, except the lower part of those spurs nearest to us, that appeared to rise like a wall from the glacier, until they gradually became blended in vapour. After a time, however, the mist in one quarter appeared to be tinged with a reddish hue, and by degrees became illuminated with the rays of the rising sun, whose powerful influence over the whole face of Nature gradually made itself apparent, although the luminary itself was still hidden from our sight by intervening ranges. The mists rose and were dispelled: the clouds, lighting up one by one, exhibited glorious tints of every hue, and then began to separate, disclosing here and there, as they opened, patches of deep-blue sky, or dazzling white snow, until by degrees the whole horizon seemed bounded by a continuous unbroken barrier of snowy ridges crowned by towering peaks and majestic summits.

Imagination can scarcely portray to the mind such scenery, and no description can convey an adequate idea of its stupendous grandeur. The earth has but few similar scenes, and as we gazed, a strange irresistible fascination seemed to steal over our senses chaining us to the spot—the immeasurable vastness and absence of any indication of the existence of man, impressing upon us an almost undefinable feeling of awe. Here the whole face of Nature bears the stamp of immortality. Seasons never change—unbroken winter ever reigns.

Looking upwards, towards the head of the glacier, the prospect was sublime, for we appeared to be standing at the base of an enormous foaming cataract, far exceeding that of Niagara in grandeur, which had been instantaneously frozen. So strong, indeed, was this resemblance, that as we gazed, strange feelings of fear came over us, lest the Power that had fixed this mighty river in all its fury and turbulence should as suddenly break the spell, and allow it to overwhelm us. It was a scene which no mortal could contemplate, and still disbelieve in the existence of God; for the voice of Nature there was irresistibly powerful, and a mysterious influence would have inculcated a natural religion even in the mind of a savage, and impressed upon him a consciousness of the infinite supremacy of an all-ruling power. On gazing upon the numerous towering peaks, that seemed to pierce the heavens, one felt “that there was speech in their dumbness.” My

companions were animated with the same feelings as myself: and the Doctor very opportunely recalled to mind, and repeated with great pathos, those glorious lines of Coleridge:—

“Ye ice-falls! ye that from the mountain’s brow
 Down enormous ravines surge down—
 Torrents, methinks, that bear a mighty voice,
 And surge as if ye knew that mighty power!
 Methinks ye speak! Speak, ye that
 With marble you glorify as the fates of heaven
 Beneath the keen full moon! Who bid the sun
 Glide you with rainbows? Who with living flowers
 Of verdure trim your granite as your feet?
 God! Let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
 Answer! and let the ice-plains echo God!”

On either side rose stupendous barriers of snow, and interminable fields of ice, varied in places with dark, frowning precipices; bleak scarped rocks, and rugged overhanging cliffs, on which the snow could not lie on account of their steepness. Down every ravine, and gully, deep snow beds, and blue glaciers rolled, each transporting masses of rock, and an accumulation of shingle and *débris*, that formed moraine in some places several hundred feet high.

Avalanches, masses of snow, and landslips, were continually falling on both sides with loud roaring noises, like peals of thunder, or salvos of artillery, obliging us to keep in the centre of the glacier, so as to be out of the way of the *débris*, and even then we were scarcely safe, for on two occasions huge boulders of fine-grained white granite, with sharply-splintered edges, evidently just broken off, flew across

our path with a strange rumbling noise. On every side the ice kept cracking and splitting, as if it were heaved up by some internal movement, causing continuous reports like volleys of musketry, and at times we felt a strange tremulous movement underfoot, somewhat resembling the shock of an earthquake. In some places we found beds of snow so honey-combed, that we sank into it waist-deep, and here we had to feel our way; but as we got into higher regions, the snow appeared to have become changed into ice.

After several hours' journey, during which excitement made us unconscious of fatigue, we came to a longitudinal chasm, far exceeding in width any we had hitherto met with, in which, at a great depth below, was seen a rapid river rushing along a channel of ice with a tremendous roar. From its size, as well as the direction in which it was flowing, both my companions coincided with me in the opinion that this was the Ganges, although about nine miles from the Cow's Mouth, generally considered its source.

The extreme length of the opening was seven hundred and forty-two paces, and its width from twelve to thirty feet. Its depth, we estimated to have exceeded four hundred and fifty feet, as our line of a hundred yards, with a stone fastened to the end, did not appear to reach two-thirds of the way down. The river, itself, looked shallow, from boulders of ice that had fallen in from the top, appearing to turn the stream. This, however, we could not prove; for,

work of genii, or the grotto of some water-nymph; for it presented a most marvellous appearance, the sides glittering as if studded with numberless brilliants and opals, and the light within assuming the most beautiful azure tints varying in shade from the pale turquoise to the deep sapphire.

The roaring noise made by the turbulence of the torrent, as it rushed dashing and foaming along its icy bed, prevented our hearing each other speak, and regardless of the cold, we were gazing in silent admiration at this magnificent specimen of Nature's handiwork, when my attention was attracted to small pieces of ice falling from above. Looking upward, I saw the Doctor's face, upon which considerable anxiety was depicted, protruding over the scarped edge of the opposite side of the chasm, and from the contortions of his mouth, I could make out that he was calling to us, although the roaring of the water below prevented his voice being heard. A significant movement of his hand, however, fully explained his meaning, and in accordance with it we retraced our steps, and after some exertion once more stood upon the surface of the glacier.

We had left our companion gathering different kinds of lichen, and examining the various species of rock that lay scattered about, in order to form some idea as to the nature of the mountains above, from which they had been carried by the continuous movement of the glacier; and he must have become so absorbed in his occupation, that he did not observe

the threatening appearance of the horizon, until his attention was called to it by one of the Ghoorkas, when he gave us warning.

An appalling calm reigned, but a momentary glance at the dark mass of clouds enveloping the summit of the mountain, satisfied us that a violent storm was brewing, for the usual deep blue sky was gone, and a grey murky vapour seemed to be approaching us rapidly from the wind's eye. Not a breath of air was stirring; still, there was a strange, indistinct rushing sound heard, like that of the wind sweeping through some distant gorge, or the monotonous souging of a tempest-tost ocean. Behind us the valley and the mountain peaks were still lighted up with the golden rays of the sun, but before us all was dark and black, and there seemed to be a spot where the bright day met the lowering gloom without mingling. I swept the now circumscribed horizon with my field-glass in the hope of discovering some temporary shelter from the violence of the coming storm, and had lowered it without any satisfactory results, when my eye met Fred's, and I read in their expression that embarrassment, which even the bravest are apt to feel when suddenly hemmed in by perils. The doctor, too, looked very serious and anxious, whilst the countenances of our native followers betrayed intense terror. We were in an awkward position, and my companions evidently looked to me to get them out of it. On every side dangers lurked, and for a moment I felt undecided

how to act, weighing the consequences of each step and calculating the chances. The odds were decidedly against us. If we remained in the centre of the glacier, we should be exposed to the whole force of the hurricane, and in all probability be swept away before it into one of the numerous yawning chasms or crevasses ; if we took refuge from the storm amongst the lateral mountains, we ran great danger of being buried alive, killed, or maimed by the avalanches or landslips that were continually falling. Again, the strange rumbling noises that issued from the glacier portended no good, and on every side the ice heaved, trembled and cracked, as if it threatened to open under our feet. Add to these perils the chances of our being frozen to death, blocked in by the snow, lost in the fog, struck by lightning, or falling into a sleep from which there is no awakening, and, on summing up, the reader will think as I did, "that we had got ourselves into a fix." Again my field-glass was put into requisition, and this time my eye glanced upon a cleft or gully in the side of the mountain, where the scarped faces of the lower rock seemed to overhang the glacier. This offered the most efficient shelter, so pointing it out to my companions, I gave directions to our people to make for it with all speed, and in a few minutes we were gathered under the lee of a projecting spur.

A moment's indecision might have proved fatal to the whole party, for scarcely had we gained the shelter than the huge pall of vapour that seemed to be

gradually descending from the mountain as if it would crush us, was suddenly rent asunder by some mysterious convulsion, a ghastly white forked flame lighted up the gloom for a moment, followed almost instantaneously by a terrific peal of thunder, which resounded in a hundred gorges, and the storm was upon us. An ominous moaning seemed to proceed from the head of the glacier, as if the god Mahadeo was grumbling in his retreat on account of mortals approaching the forbidden limit, and a thick mist, through which the sun shone like a pale red moon, now overwhelmed us, accompanied by a sharp, cold, cutting wind, against which our waterproof blankets afforded but little protection. I never felt anything like this intensely-piercing cold blast; it seemed to freeze the very blood in our veins and cause it to stagnate.* We also experienced severe acute pains across the forehead, and behind the eyes, giddiness and oppression of breathing, but I scarcely suffered as much as my companions or the Ghoorkas, whose blood-red eyes, blue lips, and strangely wan and livid countenances were horrible to behold. The Phaidee coolie got both of his hands and arms frost-bitten, and when we removed his gloves they were quite rigid, like those of a corpse, but by vigorous rubbing with snow and brandy he recovered their use. All our followers were individually brave and fearless fellows, but on this occasion they were quite disheartened and crest-

* The thermometer fell to 23° from 27°.

fallen. From the first they had looked upon our expedition as almost sacrilegious, and imagined every moment that we should encounter more than mortal adversaries for having invaded the hitherto unapproachable sanctuary of Mahadeo. Indeed, the howling of the tempest, the cracking and rending of the ice, the roaring of avalanches, and the rumbling of landslips, were all attributed to supernatural agency, as being the work of "*Bhoots*" [evil spirits, who are said to inhabit the mountain], conspiring for our destruction. For two hours the violence of the storm continued unabated, vivid streams of forked lightning flashed in quick succession, sometimes appearing in one continued blaze, the intense brightness of which almost blinded us, whilst peal on peal of thunder awakened a hundred echoes amongst the mountains. All the elements were at war, yet no rain fell, though very finely-powdered snow was driven through the air with such force, that it made the exposed parts of the face feel almost raw. At length there was a lull, when Fred and I, almost benumbed with cold, left the Doctor and people wrapped up in their coverings, and pushed up the gorge to reconnoitre. Scrambling over a heap of loose rocks and *débris*, we at length discovered a crack or fissure in the rock, forming a narrow but very lofty cave, where we determined to bivouac. Calling up the rest of the people, we commenced unpacking the kiltas, lighted a fire, and made ourselves as comfortable as the circumstances would admit.

After much patience, we heated a couple of large tins of preserved soup, and made a hot brew of strong grog, the stimulating effects of which I fairly believe kept body and soul together in some of us, and enabled all to endure the intense severity of the weather. Considerably refreshed by our hot meal, we lighted cheroots, and managed to keep tolerably warm by all lying down close together under cover of our blankets and waterproofs.

Our cavern proved impervious to the weather, and, circulation once more restored, things began to assume a different aspect. Our people regained their spirits, and the Doctor, taking out his barometric apparatus, boiled a panikin of water, and made out that we had attained an altitude of nineteen thousand one hundred and sixty feet, or nearly seven thousand feet higher than the terminal moraine at the Cow's Mouth. We now held a consultation as to our future proceedings, and it was resolved to return to camp, for although the storm was over, the hollow murmuring of thunder was still heard faintly rumbling among the distant hills, and the sky still looked dark and threatening. It was with extreme reluctance that we turned our faces from the head of the glacier, and commenced a retrograde track, for our object was not yet accomplished, and there is always a strangely mysterious fascination and inexplicable charm in perilous enterprises that lures the adventurer onward, making him feel indifferent or reckless of consequences. As circum-

stances turned out, however, it was very lucky that we did not attempt to go further, for had we done so, in all probability none of us would have returned to tell the tale. For several hours the mists and vapours continued so thick that we could scarcely see thirty yards before us, besides which we often found drifts of freshly-fallen snow so deep and soft, that we had to proceed with the utmost caution, feeling every foot of the way with our iron-shod poles, lest we should fall into some abyss. Again, owing to our slow progress, we suffered very considerably from the intense cold, our limbs getting so benumbed and stiff that walking became heart-breaking work; still we kept on, for delay was dangerous. Towards evening the fog began to clear away, revealing a patch of deep blue sky, which gradually increased in size, until the whole western horizon became clear, and a flood of golden light broke through the gloom, illuminating the whole valley. This was cheering, but we had still far to go before we could rest our aching limbs, and we anxiously watched the great orb of day sink behind the western hills, gilding the faces of the higher peaks with his lingering glory, and bringing them out in bold relief. Anxious as we were to get to our journey's end, we could not help stopping, in spite of the cold, to admire the glorious and indescribably beautiful ever-changing hues with which the heavens were tinged. After a brief space these brilliant colours gradually faded away, and the day was gone. The rising moon, however, shone clearly

and bright, and after a time the outlines of the mountains stood out as distinctly defined as at mid-day, the most distant objects being plainly discernible. We were all very much done up with our tramp, and it was with intense satisfaction that at last we descried a column of smoke, which we knew proceeded from the watch-fire of our people. Here we found a comfortable shanty constructed, and a hot meal ready, after partaking of which we rolled ourselves up in our blankets, and were soon in the land of dreams.

“Weariness

Can snore upon a flint, when restive sloth
Finds the down pillow hard.”

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ But now a long farewell ! Oft, while I live,
 If once again in England, once again
 In my own chimney-nook, as night steals on,
 With half-shut eyes reclining, oft, methinks
 While the wind blusters and the pelting rain
 Clatters without, shall I recall to mind
 The scenes, occurrences I met with here,
 And wander in Elysium.”

THIBET AND CASHMERE.

Jumnautrie, the source of the Jumna, hot-springs.—The route over the Neila pass.—Ibex shooting in the Askrung valley.—The Parung pass.—The Choomarera lake.—The kyang or wild horse.—The Chushal valley. Ovis Ammon.—The Kailas range.—Bunchowr shooting.—Ladak.—The Buddhist monastery of Hemis.—Praying machines.—The route to Cashmere.—Serinnugger.—The Shalimar gardens.—The lake.—Social gatherings.—Ferishta's description of earthly bliss.—Islamabad and the ruins of Martund.—The game of Cashmere.—A beautiful scene.—Short-sighted policy.—Kindred spirits.—The Triumvirate broken.

FEELING somewhat fatigued and stiff in the joints after our expedition to the glacier world, we rested a day to recover our marching powers, and then started by easy stages on our return to Derallee. Here we halted a couple of days, and leaving our heavier baggage, made an expedition in light marching order over the mountains to Jumnautrie, the source of the Jumna, putting up at Kursali on the Onta Gadh, the most elevated village in the valley of the Jumna. The great natural phenomena of the place are the

hot springs that issue bubbling from rocks only a few yards away from wastes of eternal snow. Having taken a sketch of the source, in which the four gigantic peaks of the Bunderpouch (that exceed twenty thousand feet in height) formed a most conspicuous back-ground, we returned to Derallee, where we found a dozen kiltas of supplies had arrived for us from Fred's factotum at Mussoorie.

As the season was now sufficiently far advanced for us to attempt *the passes*, we determined to make a forward movement, so as to get into Thibet and Cashmere before the best ground had been hunted over and the game disturbed, a great desideratum in a country annually overrun by the first sportsmen the world can produce, a class of men of Anglo-Saxon blood only to be found in India and the back-woods of America.

All our preparations for a long march were now completed, so mustering our followers and coolies, a formidable array forming almost a little army in themselves, we weeded the force by selecting the weakly-looking ones to go back to Dehra with the spoils already accumulated (which consisted of skins, horns, and divers specimens of natural history and geology), whilst we apportioned our baggage in suitable loads amongst the remainder.

I shall not bore the reader by entering into the monotonous detail of our daily marching, as our route has been described by previous explorers; and our party got over the ground so quickly, that we

had scarcely time to make any very accurate observations. During the march we were obliged to forego the exploration of many very likely-looking places for game, and had to give up all idea of regular shooting, giving our attention more to sight-seeing than sporting, except when any new species of animal was to be found, when we neither spared time nor trouble.

Crossing the Ganges, we made our way along the banks of the Goomtee Gadh, and for three days directed our course up the Neila valley, a delightful spot called by the Puharees Pool-ke-daree—the Road of Flowers; and *en route* we had some very fair burru shooting. Crossing the Neila pass, an altitude of 16,000 feet, which somewhat tried our powers as mountaineers, we entered the head of the Buspa valley, and, following the down-stream course of the river of that name, in three days arrived at Chetkoul, the first village on the Koonawur side, where we halted a day, as our people and the coolies were somewhat knocked up with seven days' continuous marching and the difficulties of the way.

Our next stages were to Raugchum, and Sangla, and from thence, over the Barung pass, an elevation of 16,300 feet above the sea, into the valley of the Sutlej. Crossing this wide, rapid, and muddy-looking river by a very precarious rope suspension-bridge, at Poaree, a few miles from Chinee, three more marches brought us to the Askrung valley, where we halted for five days, and had some capital ibex hunting.

Fred greatly distinguishing himself by his excellent shooting at long ranges. The ibex, although plentiful, were very wild and difficult to approach, having been recently disturbed ; consequently, all the game killed was by long shots. Twice Fred killed running ibex at distances considerably over four hundred yards, which is the *ne plus ultra* of brilliant marksmanship.

From Askrung we marched through Libi over the Mannerung pass (18,600 feet) to Mana, the first village in Spittee, and from thence along the Spittee river and over the Parung pass (18,800) into Rupsha, halting for three days at Kiang-dam, on the Choomarera lake, a magnificent sheet of fresh water, about twenty miles long by five broad, situated at an elevation of 15,000 feet above the sea. In the country round about the lake we first came across the kiang, or wild horse, of which we shot a few as specimens. The kiang is about fourteen hands at the shoulders, and resembles the ass much more than the nobler quadruped. They are generally of a reddish grey, with a dark stripe down the back, and almost white under the belly and inside the legs. The head is large and ugly, the mane hogged, and they are usually cat-hamed. There is great similarity between the South African quaga and the kiang in general appearance. We saw great numbers of these animals during our wanderings in this part of the country, but, our curiosity satisfied, we did not care to pull trigger at them.

Leaving the Choomarera lake we crossed the Nakpo-konding pass to Latok, near the Cheumo salt lake, and here, whilst hunting over a bleak and desolate looking region we fell in with a wandering tribe of Tartars who were returning to their summer camp near the Pang-kung lake. Their chief, a very intelligent man in his way, gave us such excellent accounts of the game in that part of the country, more especially as regarded the Naheen, or Ovis Ammon (the largest species known of wild sheep), that we determined to explore it. We sent off the yaks with the heavier portion of the baggage under charge of some of our people to Ladak, by the Tung-rung pass (18,100 feet), whilst we accompanied the Tartars, who carried about a month's supplies for us on their spare yaks. Branching off to the eastward we struck and followed up a small stream to its junction with the Indus at Mahe, and continued our way along the banks of the latter river until we came to Nioma, when our route lay in a northerly direction. We now crossed the Saka-la pass (16,000) and halted at Chushul, which we made a temporary headquarters.

We hunted in this neighbourhood five days, and under the guidance of the Tartar chief had excellent sport, falling in with numerous flocks of burru and ovis ammon. The finest specimen of the latter animal, which was as large as an ordinary bullock of the plains, Fred killed after a three hours' stalk. His horns were sixteen inches in circumference at the

base, and forty-six inches round the curve. I killed three fine rams and a female, but none of them equalled in size that killed by my companion. The female is an insignificant looking creature in comparison with the male, and the horns are not more than fourteen inches in length, and but slightly curved. We all contributed clothes, knickknacks, and sundry articles that we could spare, as a present to the chief, and put him in such a good-humour that he volunteered to accompany us to a range of mountains to the eastward of the Pang-kung lake (which I believed to be part of the Kailas range), where we should find bunchowr or wild yaks. We closed at once with this desirable offer, and started off to the eastward early the next morning.

After seven days' continuous marching through a most desolate-looking country, where the only human beings met with were a few wandering Hunnias, we passed round the north end of the lake, and struck a range of lofty mountains, which our 'Tartar guide informed us was the haunt of the bunchowr. Burrul and ovis ammon were frequently seen *en route*; but we only killed sufficient game to maintain ourselves and our people in food; and now that there was a prospect of nobler game, we did not dare to fire a shot, lest the report of our rifles might scare it away. For the first two days we explored these mountains without success: no bunchowr were to be seen, although we found numerous traces of their existence. The third morning, soon after daylight,

we saw five dark objects moving slowly over the snow, about a mile distant. Our field-glasses were put in requisition, and, to our great delight, we made out five gigantic, shaggy bulls, quietly browsing, perfectly unconscious of our presence. The ground was tolerably favourable for stalking, and, as we had taken the precaution of wearing white shirts over our ordinary hunting gear, with linen cap covers, we were scarcely distinguishable from the snow. Fortunately a strong breeze was blowing at the time, of which advantage we did not fail to avail ourselves, by keeping well to leeward, and after an exciting quarter of an hour's work, we managed to get within easy range (150 yards) of the herd, who were chewing the cud quite unsuspecting of their fate. A moment more, and two shaggy monsters were on their backs on the snow struggling in their last agonies, whilst the other three, more or less wounded, were galloping about in wild but grand confusion. Having hastily reloaded, we gave chase; but this was scarcely required, for no sooner were we perceived, than two of the three wheeled suddenly round, and with heads down, and tails on end, made a most vicious charge towards us, evidently meaning mischief. Again our rifles cracked, and two more huge bodies were floundering in the snow, which was discoloured with their gore. The fifth bull, who was slowly following the other two, being more severely wounded, now came up, and was easily despatched. Thus died five stately bulls of undaunted pluck, and great was the joy of

our Tartar followers at the prospect of such an immense supply of food. We carefully skinned the two finest specimens, and preserved the horns and tails of the others as trophies, but the hides were a great deal too heavy for our people to carry, so we were obliged to leave them on the ground, and send the yaks for them. The next morning we saw a solitary bull of immense dimensions, but he proved a very wary beast, and, notwithstanding all our precautions, the taint in the air betrayed our whereabouts, and he took himself off without giving us the chance of a shot. The day following we separated, Fred and the Doctor taking one side of a hill, whilst I explored the other. I met with several fresh traces, although I saw no game worth pulling trigger at, but my companions were more fortunate, as they fell in with a herd of seven bulls, and managed to kill three of the number. Two days after this, I again caught sight of the same old solitary bull who had baffled us on a previous occasion, and this time I was more fortunate, although I was fully three hours in circumventing him before I dared venture within range. Even then I was afraid of attempting to get within four hundred yards of him, as he was standing like an outlying sentinel on a small eminence, whilst I managed to take up a position on an adjacent height, from which I could observe all his movements. I watched him for at least twenty minutes before commencing offensive operations, for the distance was too great for me to make certain of killing, or even mortally wounding him, and there was a deep cud or

valley where the drifted snow appeared to lie deep, which I could not hope to cross without being seen. At last I fancied he was about to move away, and as his position seemed to offer a fair shot, I put up the back-sight of my heavy two-bore rifle at the four hundred yards range, and deliberately aimed at his brawny shoulder. The grooved bore carried truly, for when the smoke cleared away, I saw the huge beast was brought to his knees, and in a moment more he careened on his side, and rolled over on his back with his four feet in the air. I gave him the contents of my second barrel, which did not seem to affect him, for his position remained unchanged ; so, having carefully reloaded, I approached him, keeping myself in readiness to receive his charge, which would be the more impetuous, as it would be made down-hill. As I drew near I heard him making a peculiar moaning noise, accompanied by a succession of loud grunts, which I knew betokened extreme distress, and when I mounted the crest of the hill I saw at a glance that the game was nearly over. The poor beast was in his last agony, and too far gone to notice me, so stepping up, I put him out of pain by shooting him between the eyes, when a convulsive quiver passed over the body and all was still. I found my first shot had proved fatal, having entered just behind the shoulder and penetrated the lungs ; whilst the second had passed through the neck. The dimensions of this bull far exceeded any we had hitherto killed, and his mane, forelock, and the hair on the flanks, was much longer.

His horns were nearly eighteen inches in circumference at the base, and short in comparison. The bon-chowr, although not so high at the shoulder as the bison of the low country, is a larger and more formidable animal than the American species. He is very short in the legs, and massively built, yet very active, and capable of getting over the most difficult ground in a surprisingly short time. Their general colour is black, with dark ash under the belly and inside the legs; but they vary. I have seen some skins that were altogether black. We hunted over this part of the country for ten days, having famous sport, when finding our supplies getting short, we retraced our steps, and made the best of our way back to our former camp in the Chushul valley.

After hunting for some days in the mountains between the Pang-kung lake and the Indus, we proceeded in a northerly direction up the Chushul valley, and crossed the range by the Changla pass (16,500), striking the Sakety river, the downward course of which stream we followed until its junction with the Indus, near the village of Marsilla. Two days' marching along the banks of this river brought us to Leh or Ladak, the capital of Little Thibet, where we found our people rather uneasy at our prolonged absence. Halting here for three days, we visited the rajah's palace and the Buddhist monastery of Hemes, being shown through the place by the lamas, who were rigged out in quaint red and yellow dresses, looking very gay, but disgustingly dirty. We

witnessed a very elaborate performance in the way of a religious ceremony, when every priest seemed to make as much noise as he could, assisted by bells, horns, and drums. The praying machine, rather a remarkable institution, is sometimes worked by water-power, and I will describe it, as its adoption might save the breath of certain long-winded priests of other sects and denominations than that of the Buddhists of Thibet. It consists of a cylinder revolving on a spindle which is filled with layers of round pieces of paper covered with hieroglyphics, supposed to be the sacred mystic sentence* of the Buddhist faith written repeatedly in concentric circles. The operator turns the cylinder round, yelling out his prayer whilst he does so.

Having seen all that was worthy of notice in Ladak, we started for Cashmere, keeping along the banks of the Indus for three marches, and passing through Nurila, Lamieroo, and Drass, halted at Pandrass, where we had three days' hunting amongst the hills adjacent to the glaciers, and killed several shalmar, a species of wild sheep different to any we had hitherto fallen in with. From Pandrass four marches, *viâ* Soonamurg and Kungur, brought us to the cele-

* The sacred sentence of the Buddhist faith, which is conspicuously displayed on all the "choctains," "dhagopas," manis, topes, or shrines throughout India, is "*Aum mani padmi hoong*," and it seems to be a kind of creed in a concentrated form, as, according to Sir William Jones, it signifies, "Let us adore the supremacy of that divine Sun, the Godhead, who illuminates all, from whom all things proceed, to whom all must return, and whom we invoke to direct our understandings aright in our progress towards his holy seat."

brated Lake of Cashmere, where, finding boats, we entered the capital on the twentieth day after leaving Ladak.

Serinnugger, which signifies in Sanscrit "The City of the Sun," is a glorious place for those who love the *dolce far niente*, and being somewhat fatigued with continual daily marching, we were not at all sorry to find ourselves comfortably settled in one of the bungalows built by the Maharajah on the banks of the Jhelum for the accommodation of European visitors. Covered boats and boatmen were engaged, and we soon fell into the regular routine of the place. Our favourite retreat during the heat of the day was the gorgeous Shalimar, formerly the abode of the beautiful Noor Jehan, the wife of Jehangeer, with its barra-derree of polished black marble and crystal lake, its meandering streams, purling waterfalls, sculptured fountains, luxurious baths, and pillared kiosks, which, although falling to pieces from neglect, are still beautiful.

We also made frequent excursions upon the lake, which in some parts resembles a luxuriant flower-garden from the innumerable lilies and broad-leaved lotus plants that cover its surface. The floating islands, rich with tropical verdure of every tint and hue contrasting with range upon range of snow-clad mountains in the background and the deep blue Italian sky above, form a scene such as poets only can imagine. Moore thus describes it in "Lalla Rookh :"

“ Oh ! to see it at sunset, when warm o’er the lake
 Its splendour at parting a summer eve throws,
 Like a bride, full of blushes, when ling’ring to take
 A last look of her mirror at night ere she goes.

“ And what a wilderness of flowers !
 It seemed as though from all the bowers,
 And fairest fields of all the year,
 The mingled spoil were scattered here.
 The lake, too, like a garden breathes
 With the rich buds that o’er it lie,
 As if a shower of fairy wreaths
 Had fallen on it from the sky.”

We also frequently visited the Nusseem-bagh, or the Garden of the Morning Breeze, the Nishat-bagh, the Garden of Pleasure, the Isle of Chunar, called by the natives Chandee-ke-Lunka, or Silver Island, the Soona-ke-Luka, or the Golden Island, the Peri Mahal, or the Hall of Peris, the Tukht-i-Suliman, or Solomon’s Throne, besides inspecting the Maharajah’s palace and the Hurree-purwar fort, which latter is in a very dilapidated condition. Sometimes we enjoyed our *otium cum dignitate* whilst gliding along the river Jhelum, which traverses the city, and is crossed by seven quaint bridges built of immense logs of deodar. The high picturesque wooden structures that line the banks on each side much resemble certain parts of old Stamboul. Here and there we found traces of the ancient city that was destroyed by the Moslem conquerors, and scattered about we saw broken columns, blocks of sculptured marble, and fragments of inscriptions that were evidently of great antiquity.

Our days were devoted to exploring and sight-

seeing, and our evenings were generally spent in social intercourse, for there were many visitors from India, chiefly officials of the sword or the pen, who were passing the summer months in this bracing climate, and as a fair sprinkling of the gentler sex usually graced these gatherings, they were very pleasant. Sometimes this routine was varied by a pic-nic or a nautch in one of the many gardens on the banks of the lake, and on these occasions boating by moonlight was truly delightful; but I must not allow myself to enter into any description of the Cashmere beauties, with their dark lustrous eyes, long braided tresses, and graceful forms, or I shall scarcely know when to lay down my pen. Sufficeth to say, in the words of the poet Ferishta :—

“ I basked in the light of their almond-shaped eyes,
That like the rays of the sun inspired me with life ;
I feasted upon unsullied coy beauty in shady bowers,
As the bee culls honey from flowers of every hue ;
I inhaled the overpowering perfume of their breath,
Which soothes the senses like the fragrant scent of the jasmin.
I listened to the soothing melody of their sweet-toned voices,
That the night-birds of the grove hearing, drooped their heads and became
silent ;
I yielded to embraces, that though gentle as the clinging of the tendrils
of the vine,
Twined round the affections, and were harder to sever than shackles of
steel ;
I drank in burning kisses, that never cloyed but created insatiable desire,
Causing the heart to become water, and intoxicating the brain like the
wine of Shiraz.”

We also made frequent excursions to different parts of the valley, visiting many ruins of Hindoo architecture that betokened the wealth and civilization of

this country in days gone by. The most celebrated of these are at Martund, near Islamabad, which we found well worthy of a visit. Near this town are the celebrated gardens of Atcha-bul said to have been another of Noor Jehan's summer retreats, and here we passed a most delightful time; our days being spent in lounging under the cool shade of the plane trees, listening to murmurings of the gurgling fountains, and our evenings in the enjoyment of the nautch, which was of no mean order, the taifas of Islam-abad being celebrated both for their beauty and accomplishments. The *prima donna*, a very Bacchante, whose loveliness could scarcely have been exceeded even by the far-famed mistress of Jehangeer, warbled the love songs of Hafiz and Sadi with peculiar sweetness, having a rich contralto voice rarely to be met with amongst the Eastern votaries of Terpsichore.

Rousseau, the eloquent French author, in his "Confessions," says: "Never did a *level* country, however beautiful it might be, seem beautiful in my eyes. I must have cataracts, rocks, pines, dark forests, and rugged pathways, with steep precipices that make one shudder to behold." I cannot say that I entirely agree with him, for notwithstanding that I have wandered through all the wildest scenes of the Himalaya, my heart clings to the remembrance of the varied beauties of our English landscapes, where fields of waving golden corn, green meadows, woods, and gentle meandering rivers, alternate. There is a certain charm in such scenes that has an indescrib-

able attraction to every traveller of the Anglo-Saxon race. He feels that it pertains of *home*—of the land of his fathers, with which no other spot on earth can compare. Yet there cannot be a doubt of the influence of mountain scenery upon the mind, and there is a spell in its contemplation that never palls. Here the wanderer's feet are rarely weary, his knapsack never heavy.

Cashmere is a splendid field for the sportsman, black bears and Hungul deer, or bara-singa, being very numerous. I have heard of seven bears being killed in a day by a single gun, which I can very well believe, as I have seen these animals in great numbers, although I had too much to do in the way of sight-seeing to go far out of my way after them. The Doctor, amongst many varied accomplishments, was an adept at oil-painting, and much of his time was spent in making some very beautiful sketches of different parts of the country, which quite put Fred and myself out of conceit with our own attempts to imitate Nature's glorious handiwork. A large panorama he took of the whole valley from Khampoor, looking northward, was one of the most beautiful specimens of Oriental landscape painting I have seen, as it embraced every kind of scenery, the gigantic Nan-ga Purbut peak, which is over twenty-six thousand feet in elevation above the sea, forming a conspicuous object in the background, although about eighty miles distant. This view comprised all that was remarkable in the valley near the

capital; the Hurree Purbut fort, with its castellated battlements, the Tukht-i-Suliman, the lake, with the Haramook mountain, and the snowy ranges beyond, all clearly delineated with the most faithful perspicuity.

What Englishman ever rambled through this beautiful valley without cursing the stupid, short-sighted policy of our Government in selling "the garden of the world," the most suitable of all our Eastern possessions for European colonization, to that tyrant Ghoolab Singh for a paltry sum (75 lacs, or 750,000*l.*), which egregious act of folly was consummated on the 16th of March, 1846, only a few days after we had beaten the Seikhs in the Sutlej campaign. The hard-fought fields of Moodkee, Ferozeshuhur, Aliwal and Sobroan cost us Sale, Broadfoot, and a host of other noble spirits, and it seems heart-rending to think that the glorious spoils of that campaign should be sacrificed by the imbecility of "our diplomats" and the "itching palm" of the Government.

We spent five months cruising about this far-famed Paradise of the Hindoos, and saw everything that was worthy of notice; but our wanderings were now fast drawing to a close, for Fred's leave of absence having nearly expired, he was obliged to rejoin his regiment then stationed at Peshawur; whilst urgent private affairs required the Doctor's presence in Bombay, and I was about to return to my native land after an absence of many long years. I often look back with intense satisfaction to those happy days, for I was blessed with the companionship of two

dear friends, kindred spirits, overflowing with the milk of human kindness, and in their society I doubly enjoyed the magnificent scenery which even Moore's poetical eloquence can scarcely portray.

Bidding adieu to our numerous friends on the banks of the Jhelum, we packed up our trophies and souvenirs of the country (in the shape of a Cashmere shawl or two), and prepared for a retrograde movement; but it was with unfeigned regret that we turned our horses' heads in a south-easterly direction towards Simla *viâ* Kangra. Here the triumvirate was broken up, and the three friends parted never to meet again (on earth), for two have gone "to that bourne from which no traveller returns."

" A good leg will fall, a straight back will stoop,
A black beard will turn white, a curled pate will grow bald,
A fair face will wither, a full eye will wax hollow ;
But *a good heart* is the sun and the moon ;
Or rather the sun and not the moon,
For it shines bright, and never changes,
But keeps his course truly."

PART II.—CIRCASSIA.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ Were each dame a listening knight
I well could tell how warriors fight !
For I have seen War’s lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorn’d amid the ruling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.”—SCOTT.

Omer Pacha.—My followers.—Bashi-Bazouks.—Houssain the Arnout.—Ahmed the Koord.—Ali the Nubian.—Mahomed the Arab.—Sied Cassim the Dervish.—Abdulla the guide.—Captain Dymock’s grave.—Godova.—Wild-fowl.—A heavy bag.—The climate of Circassia.—The inhabitants: their manners, customs, and dress.—Circassian women.—The Illori chieftain.—The “ Faithful ” and the “ forbidden indulgence.”—Omer Pacha a humbug.—His reputation amongst the Turkish officers.—His wound accounted for.—His acquisitiveness and plunder.—A fearful chase by wolves.—The Turkish Colonel’s advice.—Sulleiman Pacha.—His purchase.—Revolt of the Harem.—The catastrophe and finale.

AFTER the fall of Sevastopol, I was attached, with several other British officers, to the general staff of that part of the Ottoman army under the command of Omer Pacha, which was destined to relieve Sir William Williams and the brave garrison of Kars, then closely invested by General Mouravieff; but, disgusted with the dilatory and vacillating conduct of a leader whose cowardice or treachery allowed the sole object of the expedition to fail, I obtained leave

to throw up my appointment and return to the Crimea, where I hoped again to partake of more stirring deeds. But it was not to be—"the de'il confound the ministry;" they began to make peace at the time we had just warmed to our work; and when we were best able to carry on the war, the armistice was signed, peace concluded, and "Othello's occupation gone." Finding it was uncertain when a steamer was likely to touch at Tchamshira, the nearest point of embarkation to Sugdidi, where the headquarters of the army were established, I resolved to go to Suchum Kaleh by land, amusing myself with shooting amongst the lower spurs of the Caucasus *en route*.

Besides a guide, I had five well-tried followers, whom I had picked up from amongst the Bashi-Bazouks during the campaign of the Danube : a fearless set of men, ever true to their salt, who cared neither for laws nor pachas, and who, being used to campaigning and foraging, were just the fellows to have about one in a country where "might is right," and "he may take who has the power, and he may keep who can;" for, although the Russians had vacated those districts some time previously, predatory bands of Abassians, Mingrelians, and Circassians were continually prowling about, not particularly nice as to whom they plundered. We were all well armed and mounted on Arabs, or sturdy little Kurdish horses, besides having three shaggy mountain ponies to carry our baggage, or rather to carry whatever we might

pick up, for a Bashi-Bazouk always returns heavier laden than when he set out, if he knows his trade.

The cognomen "Bashi-Bazouk" is a composite Turkish word for a class of individuals who would be allowed to exist in no country in the world save Turkey or perhaps Central America, where the term "filibuster" appears to be almost synonymous. It is derived from "bash," *a head*, "ba," *without*, "zouk," *brains*, literally, though not in reality, "*a head without brains*:" certainly not an appropriate name for men who have to live by their wits. Among the horde I commanded on the Danube before our troops landed at Varna, I counted men of twenty-seven different nations and castes.

My troop were a queer set, and merit a slight description. Hoossain, an Arnout, had been a "chaus," or serjeant, in one of the Turkish regiments engaged at Silistria, and having been deputed to wait upon me by Moosa Pacha (the gallant Arab leader who was afterwards killed on the ramparts by the explosion of a shell during the siege), found my service preferable to soldiering, at the nominal pay of twenty piastres per mensem (then twenty-two months in arrears), and, as he was a plucky, honest, and useful fellow, I kept him always with me. Fortune had dealt kindly with him; and as he had managed, by hook or by crook, to amass a sufficient quantity of gear and sundries to enable him to smoke his pipe in comfort for the remainder of his life, he had given up all intentions of joining his regiment again. In

camp, before Sevastopol, during the siege, he was a well-known character, glorying in the name of "Ingleese Jonnie," for, by dint of "*wrinkles*" picked up from an old corporal of Zouaves, my *chef de cuisine*, and sundry lessons from poor old Soyer, now, alas! gone to "kingdom come," he was no despicable cook, and formed a great addition to any party "*sub tegmine fagi*," whether out foraging in front of the enemy near Baidar, or picnicking with amateur campaigners at the Monastery of St. George.

The second, Ahmed, was a Koord, one of the followers of the Princess Kara Fathama, and a "mulassim," or lieutenant, of Bashi-Bazouks; a fearless, devil-may-care kind of fellow, who, having received some fancied insult and extortion from a pacha, hated all Turkish authorities like poison, and seemed to glory in setting them at defiance. He was strikingly handsome, a splendid horseman, a famous fellow in a bush, and the *beau ideal* of a Bashi-Bazouk.

The third, Ali, commonly called "Kutchuc" (the Little One), was a Nubian of colossal proportions and gigantic strength, who was devoted to me, I having saved him from the Cossacks in an affair on the Danube, after he had been disabled by several severe wounds, and abandoned by his comrades, which service he amply repaid afterwards, when I, in my turn, was laid on my back, by his constant attention and unwearied care for my wants.

The fourth, Mahomed, was an Arab, or rather, a Khabyle by birth, who had fought with the Emir

Abd-el-Kadir against the French, and, having been obliged to fly his country, had entered the corps of Bashi-Bazouks, from whence I took him to look after my horses, he being a first-rate groom.

The fifth, Sied Cassim, was a Hindoostanee from Northern India, who, being of a roving disposition, had turned "fakeer," or dervish; and, after having performed the "hadj," or pilgrimage to Mecca, had wandered all over Asia Minor and Persia, and at last enrolled himself in the ranks of the Bashi-Bazouks. He was a trustworthy fellow, and, being a good scholar in Persian, Hindostanee, Arabic, and Turkish, used to act as paymaster, or rather as the divider of the spoils, and keep the accounts, from which he usually went by the name of the "Vakeel," or secretary. He also claimed to be a descendant of the prophet, and always wore the significant badge, a green turban.

Our guide, Abdulla, was likewise a Hindostanee by birth, but had left his country when a child, with an Arab cloth-merchant, who had sold him to the Circassians, by whom he had been adopted as one of themselves. He was a great chum of Cassim's, and I took him into my service, as he had a good knowledge of the Circassian and Abassian languages, as well as the various dialects of the different mountain tribes, and was well acquainted with the country. Being quite a youth, he generally went by the name of "Chojuck" (the Young One). His office was that of interpreter, and he was charged with the care of five very handsome greyhounds and a pointer, which fell

into my hands by the fortune of war, and furnished me with many a game dinner when nothing else was procurable.

We left Sugdidi early in the morning, crossing the Ingur, by the redoubt which was thrown up by the Ottoman troops after they had forced the passage on the morning of the 7th November, when poor Captain Dymock fell, shot through the heart, whilst he was leading the column to the attack. We buried him close to where he fell, under two beautiful trees, covered with festoons of wild vine. I staid a few moments to take a hurried sketch of a brave comrade's last resting-place, and then rode on to Godova, on the coast, where we arrived about 3 P.M.

I was most hospitably received by an old colonel of infantry, who, with his regiment, was left in charge of some stores; and in a marsh near the village I killed a couple of pintail ducks, three couple of snipe, and a bittern, and "Guimish" (Silver), one of my greyhounds, caught a hare.

The country round about Godova is densely wooded; oak, ash, chestnut, walnut, and most kinds of European fruit-trees seeming to grow indigenous and in the wildest luxuriance, whilst the loveliest flowers bloom in perfection; amongst which I noticed the tulip, anemone, hyacinth, ranunculus, rose, pink, jasmin, and violet, besides numberless other species with which I was not previously acquainted. The lower spurs of the Caucasus, the grandest of mountain ranges, rise about seven miles to the eastward of the

village, and run parallel to the coast. The lower ranges are clothed with dense and almost impenetrable primeval forest, whilst the higher are covered with perpetual snow, and generally enshrouded by mists.

The heavy falls of rain, and the melting of snow and ice on the mountains, in the summer, when the power of the sun is strong, swell the numerous rivers and watercourses into mighty torrents, causing them to overflow their banks and inundate the surrounding country; forming large marshes or bogs, which, at certain seasons of the year, are almost alive with waterfowl of different kinds, whilst snipe and woodcock are to be found in thousands.

It is my belief that swans, ducks, and geese of all kinds, besides snipe and woodcock, choose these secluded and almost inaccessible spots to breed in, migrating here for that purpose from all the other countries of Europe. I have killed seventeen different species of duck and teal in one jheel, the water in places where the weed abounded on which they feed being black with them. They were evidently unaccustomed to the sound of a gun, for when the echoes of the report died away in the distant hills, they would settle down in the same place without taking alarm, although each discharge brought down about a dozen of their number. The bag that might be made may be estimated from the fact that I killed in one day in a jheel near the foot of the Abassadagh Mountain, fourteen miles from Tshamshira, thirty-four brace of woodcock, eleven couple of snipe, seven

geese, and sixty-one ducks ; and could have continued the slaughter, were it not that the villagers, for whose benefit it was intended, declared that they could not carry more away. I think I must have flushed that day at least a hundred brace of cock, besides snipe innumerable. I hope my reader will not imagine from this account that I at all countenance or am in favour of such wholesale destruction as a general thing ; but it must be remembered that at this time I had many mouths to feed, that food of any kind was at a premium, and I had nothing in store except mouldy Turkish ration biscuit, full of weevils and other such indescribable animalculæ.

The climate, soil, and magnificence of scenery, render the east coast of the Black Sea one of the most beautiful and interesting countries in the world. It is abundantly irrigated by numberless rivers flowing from the mountains, and the valleys are extremely fertile, producing cotton, rice, wheat, millet, Indian corn, hemp, flax, and quantities of excellent grasses, with little labour ; yet the inhabitants are generally poor, holding in contempt agriculture and all employments of a peaceful kind. They are divided into several nations, tribes, and castes, which are again subdivided. The principal are the Tcherkesses, the Kabardines, the Abassians, the Mingrelians, and the Georgians. The Tcherkesses, or Circassians, said to be derived from the Tyches (who settled in the country several centuries ago), are essentially mountaineers, and have many qualities in common with

the Scottish Highlanders of the olden day. Their element is war, and they possess all the characteristics peculiar to the inhabitants of lofty regions, being divided into tribes and clans, each of which is governed by a chief invested with the power of life and death over his followers. They chiefly profess the Mahomedan religion, but, having no written language, their faith differs considerably from that of other Mussulmen; a traditionary history and code of laws, which has been transmitted from age to age, and become hallowed from its antiquity, being substituted for the Koran. The old men act as judges, and settle all the affairs of the community, subject to the supreme authority of the chief, whose will is law. They are an exceedingly fine and handsome race; the men being tall, well-made, and muscular, though rather of slight build, with pleasing features, flowing beards, and remarkably small hands and feet.

The dress of the common people in some respects resembles that of the Tartars, but is more elegant; it consists of a sheepskin cap, with high peak of grey cloth, white or yellow linen tight-fitting trousers, yellow boots, and shirt-like tunic, bound with gold or silver lace, having on each side of the breast cases made of morocco, for holding cartridges. Their arms are a kind of rifled matchlock, pistol, sabre, and broad, heavy double-edged poignard. Their chiefs or nobles, however, present a much more brilliant spectacle, being clad, when in full dress, like our knights of old, in coats of mail composed of rings of steel

joined together with the most beautiful workmanship, and armed with damascened sabres, daggers, and richly-ornamented pistols, often inlaid with gold.

Their women have long been celebrated for their extreme beauty, the harems of Constantinople being kept supplied from the descendants of slaves, though not, as is generally supposed, from the families of the free tribes. They are of slender and elegant figures, with regular features, white skin, and dark-brown or black hair, with blue eyes. They are in general neither reserved nor confined, but at the age of ten or twelve years they are incased in a broad leathern band, tightly sewn round the waist, which they wear until marriage. Over a low-cut chemise they wear a long laced jacket with wide trousers, and they heighten their beauty by painting their eye-brows with a preparation of antimony called "soormah," and stain the nails of the toes and fingers with henna. Their hair is generally plaited, and falls down the back, and a small sheepskin cap, with the upper part embroidered, is commonly worn.

Their villages consist only of "konaks" or log-huts, plastered with clay inside, and seldom containing more than one room. A wooden bench or sedan runs all round, and one part, covered with matting, serves as a bed. The only furniture or garniture, are the saddles, arms, and a few brass or copper cooking-utensils.

The customs of ancient Sparta are in some degree in force amongst them, the youths being brought up

in all bodily exercises calculated to increase strength and agility—such as riding, running, wrestling, shooting, and they are accustomed to endure hunger and fatigue. To fall in the field is considered an honour, and to kill an enemy a triumph; stealing is also allowed and encouraged, that is, provided it is not found out, for, if the culprit is detected, he is bound to restore the stolen property sevenfold. Murder or crime is generally punished by fine, more or less, according to the rank of the victim.

Some of the Kabardines and Abassians profess a kind of Christianity, but they are a more degenerate and treacherous race than the Circassians, who, though cruel, crafty enemies, are extremely hospitable and more to be depended upon.

A petty chieftain, who lived with his tribe in the mountains to the northward of Illori, dined with us; and, as he spoke Turkish tolerably well and was exceedingly communicative, I gleaned a good deal of useful information about the country and the kind of game that was likely to be met with. According to his account, bears of an immense size, as well as wolves, hyenas, and jackals were to be found on the mountains, besides red-deer, wild cattle, hog, wild goats, and sheep (which latter proved to be ibex and chamois). He invited me to visit his “konak” *en route*, and undertook to show me game of different kinds, which offer I was glad to accept.

When the repast was over, coffee served, and the servants out of the way, I produced a little keg of

brandy; and, notwithstanding we were all supposed to be good Mussulmen, it went round merrily, and opened the hearts of "the Faithful."

The "cratur" made the eyes of the old Osmanli colonel glisten again, and, as the keg passed round pretty often, it soon began to show its effects, rendering him extremely loquacious, and he recounted several very amusing incidents of his early service, besides expatiating, in the strongest of Turkish Billingsgate, against the Sirdar Ekrem Omer Pacha, whom he denounced as an arch-humbug, who has usurped the credit of other men's acts, and gained the position he held by cringing servility, base intrigue, and despicable chicanery—being totally destitute of all those qualities which he ought to possess, not only as a general, but a man. He was said never to have been under fire, except on one occasion when he could not help himself (at Eupatoria); and the small scar he has on his wrist, which he often brags about, and shows to strangers as a wound, was thus accounted for:—"During one of the outbreaks of the 'Ryahs' or Christian subjects of the Porte, in Southern Turkey, he was sent in command of a body of troops against a walled village not very far from Monastir, which was vigorously defended by the inhabitants, armed only with matchlocks and yatagans. A long-continued drought had dried up most of the wells in the enceinte of the place, and the besieged had to obtain their supply from a spring in the ditch outside the walls, which task was generally undertaken by

the women and children after nightfall. This fact was communicated to Omer Pacha by some of his sycophants, and he ordered the small brass rifled mountain-piece, which he always keeps in front of his tent, to be pointed so as to command the source on a rising ground, far out of range of the small-arms of the garrison. During the night a noise was heard in the ditch by some of the advanced sentries, and the Pacha was informed that the villagers were drawing water: he immediately rushed to his gun and loaded it, not knowing that one of his staff had previously made it all ready for him. When he applied the match, the piece, being doubly charged, recoiled violently, knocking down the pacha on the broad of his back, with half-a-dozen of his hangers-on, and injuring his wrist. Thus is the only wound Omer Pacha ever received accounted for, and it is not to be wondered at if he never mentions how and when he got it."

Omer Pacha had appropriated to himself the whole of the plunder of Princess Dadien's palace at Sugdidi, despatching for his own use, at Constantinople, a magnificent collection of furniture, consisting of chairs and couches covered with crimson velvet, beautiful inlaid tables, magnificent chandeliers, and articles of *virtu*, which looked like recent importations from Paris. The tame deer and peafowl were killed for his table, and the exotic plants transported to his garden at Stamboul.

Story-telling is a great amusement amongst the

Turks, and each of us in his turn had to contribute some anecdote for the amusement of the rest.

The Abassian chief gave us a very thrilling account of the loss of five of his tribe, with some prisoners, by wolves, during the winter of 1852, when the whole country lay covered with snow for months together. It appears that a force had been collected and sent out in the plains to harass and annoy the Russians, but, having met with a reverse, they scattered, and each tribe made the best of their way homeward. The Abassian party, to which the narrator belonged, consisted of eleven men, fairly mounted and armed with matchlocks, pistols, and swords, with five prisoners—four Russian soldiers and a woman. As they were traversing a vast steppe or plain they perceived a pack of seven wolves slowly following them, of which number they killed two or three with their matchlocks, for the sake of the fur, and, dispersing the rest, continued their journey. Shortly afterwards a strange howling noise was heard in the rear, which at first sounded like the roaring of the wind, but afterwards increased to such a pitch, that they thought Jehannum (the infernal regions) was turned loose, and that the cry they had heard was the exulting laugh of the “gins” and “afrits” (evil spirits), whom they believe to inhabit the impenetrable snows of Mount El-bruz. At length their attention was called to a dark mass of black objects spreading over the snow, like a cloud on the horizon, and the full extent of their danger now burst upon

them, for they knew they were pursued by a horde of wolves.

Their horses were already fatigued with a long day's journey, but terror seemed to give them wings, for they tore along as if they knew their peril, and for awhile seemed to hold their own. The nearest "konak" or hamlet was at least two "saat" or seven miles distant, and the ground was in many places so deep with drifted snow that their horses could hardly get along. The crisis was now evidently fast approaching, for the advanced troop were almost within gun-shot, howling and yelling as only wolves can. A brief consultation was held, and it was determined to sacrifice the prisoners one by one, so as to gain time for the rest to escape. The woman met her fate first, one of their number stepping behind, drew his sabre across the hocks of her horse, hamstringing it, and causing both to fall heavily to the ground. Her shrieks, as well as the cry of the horse in his death agony, rang through their ears for a moment, and then all was still. They anxiously looked back, and found that this desperate expedient had enabled them to gain a considerable distance on their pursuers, but it was not for long; they were soon again on their heels, when a Russian soldier was sacrificed by shooting his horse; a second, third, and fourth followed and much time was gained and a considerable distance covered: still their insatiable foes pressed on, apparently more ferocious than before, for their appetite was whetted with the taste of blood. They

now commenced discharging their fire-arms amongst them, but it was of no avail, for although many fell, the rest rushed on, and the course of the horde was not stayed. The horses of two of their number now gave up, and fell with shrieks that told they knew the fate that awaited them; and, although their riders were swift on foot, they could not keep up their speed for any length of time in the deep snow, and soon became fatigued, so bidding their comrades farewell, they resigned themselves to their "kismet" (destiny), drew their yatagans, and shouting their battle-cry, died like men, fighting to the last. The survivors were now within a couple of miles from shelter, but their horses were almost worn out, the leading wolves hardly a pistol-shot behind, and gaining upon them rapidly—another moment, and they expected to feel their fangs, when an old man, whose two sons were also present, seeing the hopelessness of the case, bade his comrades farewell, and shouting out the "imaun" (Mahomedan creed) as a death-song, felled his horse to the ground with the heavy butt of his pistol, as he could not rein up the scared animal, and offered himself a willing sacrifice to save the rest. On tore the survivors, now reduced to eight in number, and on followed their relentless pursuers, now again only half a dozen horses' length behind. In spite of all their efforts, their doom seemed sealed, and their case hopeless, when their chief, giving an expressive look to the narrator, drew his pistol and shot the man nearest to him through the head. He threw up his

arms and dropped the reins, but although stone-dead sat firm in the saddle, the affrighted animal carrying the corpse, until a second discharge brought both to the ground. Again the pursuit was checked for a time, and the konak appeared in view ; luckily the door was open, for it was deserted, men and horses rushed in, the door was closed and a ponderous bar drawn across inside, when suddenly a loud heart-rending yell was heard from without, above the howling of the wolves, and they saw, through the chinks between the logs, one of their comrades whose horse had broken down and lagged behind, unperceived by the rest, surrounded by the horde and fighting desperately—a moment more and he was pulled from the saddle and both man and horse devoured before their eyes. Then the wolves surrounded the hut, and, finding themselves balked of their prey, began to fight amongst each other, at times endeavouring to scratch away the earth under the logs or force their ways through the crevices, but the hut being substantially constructed, resisted all their efforts, and a deadly discharge of fire-arms was kept up from the interior, which thinned their numbers and revenged their fallen friends, but the dead wolves were speedily devoured by the survivors who remained howling and shrieking round the hut until the night of the second day, when a violent storm arose and they took themselves off in the dark, much to the relief of the six survivors, who, seeing the coast clear, made the best of their way to their homes.

“Allah kereem (God be merciful), but you had a wonderful escape!” exclaimed the old colonel, when the Illori chieftain had finished his story. “I thank Kismet (fate) that I was not with you on that day, or I should have stood but a poor chance in your desperate race for life (he weighed at least eighteen stone), and a shudder comes over me when I think of it; and if I were you, oh! Ingleese Bey (so he termed me), I should give up all idea of rambling about this desolate country, where one sees nothing but mountains, trees, rivers, and mud; may go a moon’s journey without falling in with a café, and where fighting comes oftener than one’s dinner. Be advised, and embark at once for Stamboul, where you may enjoy your “kieff” (a dreamy state of listless idleness, peculiar to the Turks), and smoke your chibouk, surrounded with dark-eyed beauties, whose voices are more melodious than the cries of jackals, whose kisses are more desirable than the bites of wolves, and whose embraces are preferable to the hugs of bears. Heigh, Allah! when shall I see the blessed place again?”

“Shabash! (Bravo!) Bey Effendi!” I exclaimed; “you are too greedy, and it is fortunate that every one is not of your opinion, or some would come poorly off; for where are all the women to come from, if every man required a troop? I am more moderate, being content with one at a time; besides which, I do not like having a continual ‘karabalik’ (disturbance) in the house, which is always the case

when women get together; for I am of the same opinion as the sage, who says that it is an easier task to rule a thousand men than to control two women; and, to prove that my theory is correct, I will relate to you the sad fate of a man you all knew, who owed all his misfortunes to taking one woman too many in his establishment.

“Sulleiman Pacha, late commandant of the first brigade that landed in the Crimea, was formerly a collector of customs in the Pachalic of Widdin, and subsequently held some lucrative civil appointment at Stamboul. Tax-gathering, for a number of years, had made Sulleiman Aga a rich man; and through the interest of Mehemet Ali Pacha, backed up with a large packet of ‘kaima’ (paper money), the Aga was made a Lever Pacha (general of brigade), and things went on swimmingly for a time. One day, however, the horizon of his destiny was darkened with the cloud of misfortune; for as he was enjoying his chibouk at a café near the ‘Buyuk Chouk’ (Grand Bazaar), he was accosted by an old friend, and in an evil moment accepted an invitation to accompany him to a slave-merchant’s ‘khan,’ in order to select a Nubian eunuch as a guardian for his harem. This matter settled, the slave-merchant took them to see a magnificent Georgian damsel, who was considered to be the finest importation for many years. Her price was eighty thousand piasters (about six hundred pounds sterling), and Sulleiman Pacha became so captivated with her appearance, that, notwithstanding he

was an elderly man, and had three wives at home, he became the purchaser ; and the object of his affections was ordered to be conveyed to his garden-house near Scutari, *on the extreme quiet*, so that his other wives might hear nothing about it. The pacha thought he observed a diabolical twinkle in the eye of the slave-dealer, when, after he had received his money, he wished him ‘every felicity ;’ but at the moment he merely thought he had been cheated out of some piastres, which, being rich, he did not care about, never imagining that he would have such cause to repent of his bargain. The cunning old fox then went home, and informed his wives that he was obliged to start on a journey, and after taking an affectionate farewell he set off for his country house. His reception could not have proved very satisfactory, nor did he ever disclose to me what actually passed, for although he has often related his grievances to me, at this point he invariably worked himself up into such a rage that I could make out little but a long string of curses against a cat-like fiend who must have escaped from ‘Jehanum’ (the infernal regions), so I concluded he got his face clawed. However, he admitted that he spent the night in a neighbouring *café*, and when he went home the next morning he found a mutiny had taken place in his harem ; for whether his scratched face and disordered appearance told tales, or some maliciously inclined persons had given his wives an insight into the affair, he knew not, but he was received with torrents of abuse.

One knocked his turban off, a second pulled his beard, the third spat in his face, and they all left the marks of their nails on his person, besides belabouring him with the heels of their slippers until he was almost insensible, when the guardians of the fold, of the 'third sex,' came to the rescue, and enabled him to get out of their clutches. Finding himself driven out of house and home, he grew desperate, and, being weary of his life, went for a soldier, thinking to terrify the household into subordination, for he had no idea of going to fight; and the seraskier (minister of war) gave him the command of a brigade of 'redifs' (militia), which, unfortunately for our hero, were the first troops ordered out on active service in the Crimea, and he was obliged to go. Although not actually engaged, he saw quite enough of the battle of the Alma to turn his stomach against the profession he had chosen, and satisfy himself that the smell of powder did not agree with his constitution; so, after a solemn consultation with his second in command, Colonel Haleem Bey, as great a poltroon as himself, both parties decamped one fine morning, without beat of drum, and found their way to Stamboul; for which act the seraskier, Riza Pacha, brought them up before the mejlis (council of war) on a charge 'of having cowardly abandoned their post in the field before the enemy;' and in the presence of all the troops they were degraded from their respective ranks, and are now vegetating in prison.

"This *finale* was, however, against my interests, as

one evening before the pacha left the Crimea, when we were talking about the chances of an engagement at an early period, he said, ' You are an Englishman, and like fighting, and cannot be afraid of a woman; so what do you say to taking my eighty thousand piastres' worth off my hands? She is as good as when I bought her, and I will give you a house and garden with her, and adopt you as a son.' Of course I closed with his offer at once, but our little arrangement was put an end to by his sentence; so you see, my friends, that the old adage is true which says, ' Wherever there is misfortune, a woman is sure to be at the bottom of it.' "

CHAPTER XXIX.

“Oft had he shown, in climes afar,
 Each attribute of roving war :
 The sharpen’d ear, the piercing eye,
 The quick resolve in danger nigh ;
 The speed that in the flight or chase
 Outstripp’d the Carib’s rapid race ;
 The steady brain, the sinewy limb,
 To leap, to climb, to dive, to swim ;
 The iron frame inured to bear
 Each dire inclemency of air ;
 Nor less confirmed to undergo
 Fatigue’s faint chill, and famine’s throe.”—ROKEBY.

Circassian scenery.—A false alarm.—The Bey’s konak.—Rifles and revolvers.—Circassian cuisine.—A goose cooked *à la* Mrs. Harris.—Uninvited company.—News of a bear.—A night prowler.—A Huntsman’s toilet.—The route through the ravines.—The lair.—The Bey’s dogs give tongue.—An enormous bear wounded.—A man mauled.—The Bruin bites the dust.—The bivouac.—Horses stolen.—Mussulman apathy.—The pursuit.—The trail.—The plunderers surprised and taken.—Their punishment.

THE next morning we all set out with the Illori chieftain, and, after four hours’ ride through a densely-wooded country, arrived at the gorge of a romantically picturesque valley, which appeared to wind its way for several miles between two lofty mountain ridges, forming a part of the chain of the Caucasus ; a tortuous path, so narrow that we were obliged to ride in single file, and keep a sharp look out that we did

not come in contact with overhanging rocks or branches of trees, wound along the edge of a chasm, in which a foaming mountain-torrent dashed impetuously ; and, at times, we passed along the brinks of precipices which made the head giddy to look over. Here and there gigantic forest-trees stood out in bold relief, and towering crags of castellated form rose in every direction, whilst patches of gorgeous flowers of various colours were seen among the luxuriant herbage, adding their rich tints, as if to harmonize with the exquisite beauty of the surrounding scenery.

As we were picking our way over the strong bed of a mountain stream which had cleft a wide opening through the forest, I was rather startled by hearing the sharp crack of a rifle, and the “ping” of a bullet high over our heads, which, from the streak of smoke, evidently came from a high rocky crag commanding the ford on the opposite bank ; and, instinctively, both myself and followers, apprehensive of treachery, unslung our rifles, and prepared for action by springing from our saddles and taking advantage of the cover of huge boulders of rock that were scattered about in every direction. But the Illori Bey, who was much amused by our proceedings, informed us that we were approaching his “konak,” and that the shot we heard was merely a signal from one of the outlying scouts of his tribe, who, being at feud with their neighbours, were obliged to keep a strict watch on the defile leading to their hamlet. One of his followers answered the signal by discharging his pistol, and in a few

moments a number of young men came galloping up on rough mountain-ponies, who gave us a cordial welcome, and saluted us by touching our feet with the tips of their fingers, and then raising them to their foreheads.

On the slope of a hill, surrounded by a small patch of Indian corn, stood the hamlet, which consisted of about half-a-dozen log-huts, each containing a single apartment; and one of the largest, by the orders of the Bey, was cleared out of its occupants, consisting of an indiscriminate medley of men, women, children, ponies, sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, geese, fowls, &c., and given up for the accommodation of my people and horses, being sufficiently roomy to contain all comfortably.

I was conducted to the "dewan-khana," or guest-house, and introduced to the elders of the tribe as the "Ingleese Bey," where, after pipes and sherbet had been handed round by boys, I had to undergo a long series of cross-questioning as to the recent events of the war.

At last my revolvers, which I always wore loaded in my belt in case of accident, attracted their attention, and they all jumped up thunderstruck when I explained their action; but I was not believed until I had exhibited their powers by lodging ten bullets in a small circle of a walnut-tree about twenty paces distant from the door of the hut. In order more strongly to impress upon their minds the nature of our armament, so as to guard against any attempt at

treachery, I directed one of the boys to hang a dry gourd, which served as a water-vessel, on a stalk of Indian corn about a hundred yards distant, and sent a couple of bullet-shots through it with my double rifle; and, whilst they were examining the weapon, I slipped the extra loaded chambers in my revolvers and again fired them off, much to their consternation and wonder; indeed, they looked upon me as very closely allied to "the nameless one," for I heard them congratulating themselves in an undertone that none of their enemies had *demon-inspired* pistols that were of fatal aim and never required loading.

When we again adjourned to the hut I found that breakfast had been served, consisting of several dishes, but I was most woefully disappointed in the cookery, which was wretched in the extreme, I may say execrable; for, although hungry, I could hardly manage to swallow half-a-dozen mouthfuls: the bill of fare consisting of rank goat's-flesh boiled up with millet-seed, black broth, sundry preparations of sour milk, smoked kouskous, and pillaf made of rancid butter, roasted Indian corn, and black-looking maize cakes. At last the repast was over, and, making some excuse about looking after the horses, I bolted to my people, whom I found comfortably established and supplied with all they required.

One of them had managed to get hold of a goose, and, as I felt nearly ravenous, I devoted him to "sudden death," converted him into a savoury mess in less than ten minutes, by an old campaigning

recipe which, for the benefit of future foragers, I give *à la* Mrs. Harris's: "First catch your goose, cut off the head, pull off the feathers with the skin, cut the meat from off the bones in small square pieces, and chuck them into a frying pan, with butter, pepper, and salt, if you have any, letting them stew until they assume a rich brown colour, when you may begin to eat." Bread or biscuit fried up with the fat is a considerable adjunct.

My hunger satiated, the gang, according to their usual custom, made a huge fire of dry logs on a piece of open ground a short distance in front of the hut; and, spreading my carpet to windward, I prepared to enjoy the "fragrant weed," and cogitate upon the programme for the morrow, whilst our *tents d'abri* (of which each of us carried a part in front of his saddle) were being pitched: it being considered preferable to sleep under canvas to remaining in the hut, on account of vermin; fleas having been found so large and numerous that Kuchuk declared that he was afraid of molesting or annoying any of the race, for, if they made a combined attack and all pulled one way, he felt sure they would be able to drag him bodily out of the hut.

There is no time more pleasant in the life of an old forest-ranger than the setting in of the night, after a good day's sport, when the hunters recline round the log-fire, shaded from the evening dew by the canopy of some gigantic forest-tree, and talk over the events of the day or the hopes of the morrow. Then the

soothing cheroot and comforting can of grog are indeed luxuries, and old familiar airs and stirring tales go round cheerily, carrying the heart back to happy bygone scenes of home, and dear old friends, far away in "Merrie England." None of my sporting chums caring to accompany me in this trip to regions marked in the best maps as "unknown tracts," I was without companion, and time hung heavily on my hands when not *en route*, or on the look-out for game, so I was very glad when the Bey Effendi came to consult me as to the most suitable arrangement for the morrow's battue. He was accompanied by a very intelligent young fellow of his tribe, who, whilst watching the cattle out at pasture, had discovered the lair of an immense bear, whose depredations had been severely felt during the winter months, when, emboldened by hunger, he had carried off horses picketed close to the "konak."

I decided to beat him out if possible, and, after a long smoking-match and some talk with the Bey as to the best plan of proceeding, he went to warn his people to be in readiness to start at the first appearance of dawn on the morrow, and I crept into my tent, rolled myself up in my blankets, and, being tired, was soon in a sound sleep, from which I was awakened by some one, as I thought, unceremoniously shaking me by the shoulder; but the visitor proved to be a half-famished prowling jackal, who was trying to drag away the buffalo-robe which served as an

outer covering. I scared him away by shouting, and he vented his indignation by setting up a melancholy howl, which started a most infernal chorus from half-a-dozen packs in the neighbouring woods; but, being well accustomed to such "jungle melody," I turned over, and once more composed myself to sleep.

When I awoke the next morning, I found my followers busily employed in rubbing down the horses, and the whole of the male portion of the tribe, with the exception of a few left to guard the village, preparing for the field. I gave myself a shake like a spaniel, and washed out my mouth (the ordinary toilet of a hunter of the deep jungle, who generally performs his ablutions in the first stream he comes to), and, after hastily swallowing a cup of coffee and a biscuit, I mounted my horse, and hastened the departure of the party, which consisted of about forty individuals, most of them mounted on rough mountain-ponies, and armed with matchlocks, pistols, attaghans, &c.

The track lay through a gorge in the mountains, and, when day broke, presented a magnificent scene, as the sun dispelled the fog and mists which seemed to cling to the gigantic masses of rock piled on each other in endless variety of shape and extraordinary confusion; but I felt too much absorbed in surmising upon the different kinds of large game that were likely to be met with in such a vast extent of virgin forest, to pay very much attention to the picturesque beauties that lay in my path.

After about three hours' riding, we came to a large log cattle-shed, used only in the summer months, when the best pasturage is to be found on the lower spurs of the mountains; and here we had to leave the horses under the charge of a guard, as the track became impracticable for them.

The Illori chief described this bear to be a terrible animal, standing as high as a pony, but, as I had a double-gun and rifle, and a brace of revolvers, I considered myself more than a match for him.

The herdsman now led the way, and under his guidance we climbed, in Indian file, a steep rocky hill, which caused us to puff and blow, and made our knees tremble before we got to the top; where, by dint of scrambling on our hands and knees, creeping along the edges of break-neck precipices, and hanging on to perilous ledges, we managed to work our way along the crest until we came to a deep rocky ravine on the other side, which appeared to have been denuded of the dense bush that generally covered the face of the country, by the violence of numerous mountain torrents, which, when swollen by the rains, or the melting of the snow, dashed down the steep descent with immense force, and swept away all the underwood in their course. Here our guide assured us the lair was, and, indeed, it looked a likely place to meet with queer customers, for in all my peregrinations I never saw a wilder country.

After an hour's careful investigation, during which I came across several trails of red and roe deer, hogs,

wolves, jackals, and foxes, as I was crossing a patch of sand in the dry bed of a stream I perceived the fresh footprints of a bear, which I instantly saw must be a very large one, from his long stride and the size of his pugs, my hand hardly covering them.

I followed up the trail for some distance, but lost it on some rocky ground, and was making casts in different directions in order to regain it, when some of the Bey's dogs, which had gone on some short distance ahead, gave tongue, and immediately after I heard a sullen roar, followed by four or five dropping shots. I sprang upon a boulder of rock and discovered an enormous, dirty white-looking bear in full pursuit of four or five Abassians, who were running shrieking up the hill-side about two hundred yards distant. One of them, in his frantic flight, tripped over a stone, and before he could rise the brute was upon him. Although the hind-quarters of the animal only were presented to me, I threw up my rifle and let drive; whether it was that my hand was unsteady that morning, or that I feared hitting the man, I know not, but the first bullet fell short; the second, however, struck fair, and the bear, with a sharp hoarse cry of pain, quitted the fallen man, and again made after the rest. I reloaded as quickly as possible and ran up towards the wounded man, when I again saw Bruin for a moment, and got a couple of snap-shots at him as he bolted into some cover, having been turned by a straggling volley from some of my gang and the Bey's people. I found the

youth who had fallen into the bear's clutches severely bitten in the shoulder, besides having his sides clawed, and being considerably bruised and shaken, though not dangerously hurt; so, after bandaging his wounds as well as I could, I collected the people together, and prepared to make another effort to dislodge Bruin from his shelter.

One of my people had seen him enter some thick underwood between two large rocks, and I tried to coax the dogs to go in and drive him out; but it was of no use, they only ran yelping round the thicket. Two of their number had been killed in the first onset, and some of the others severely mauled, which damped the courage of the rest; so, finding that nothing could be effected with their assistance, I posted all the people in groups as safely as I could at one end of the cover, in case the game might break without showing fight, and followed up the trail, which was very plainly marked with blood alone.

The brushwood was very thick, and much impeded my movements, so I got on but slowly; but, by dint of creeping on my hands and knees and scrambling, I managed to get some distance into the cover, when I heard a savage growl, followed up by a low grunting noise, evidently not far from me.

I peered through the bush, but could see nothing; so, resting my rifle against the trunk of a tree, I endeavoured to swarm up, in order to have a better look round. I had hardly raised myself a couple of

feet from the ground when, with a terrific roar, the brute, which must have got wind of me, charged. Luckily, the bush was so thick in front that he could not get at me very easily, but had to make a turn which gave me time to seize and cock my rifle ; and as his monstrous head, with flashing eyes and open jaws, appeared about a couple of paces from me, I gave him the contents of both barrels, which almost stunned him, for he spun round and round, and I had time to follow it up with my smooth-bore, both bullets taking effect in the head ; but such was the enormous tenacity of life that he managed to tear out of the cover, rolling over and over as he went.

After reloading carefully, I followed up and found him sprawling about on the ground, moaning piteously. As I got out of the bush he caught sight of me, and made another headlong charge, reeling from side to side as he came ; but I stopped him with another bullet in the head, which made him bite the dust. He rose again, and got up on his hind-legs as if to look round, and whilst in this position he looked a fearful object, standing, as he did, with his fore-paws raised about seven feet high and the blood pouring in torrents out of his mouth. I now had a fair shot at his chest, and inflicted a mortal wound, for he rolled over and over, making his teeth meet in the root of a tree with his last dying effort.

He proved to be the largest bear I ever met with, standing over four feet high at the shoulder,

and, from the number of men it took to lift him, I should think he could not have weighed less than eight hundred pounds. He appeared to be of the same species as the hill-bear of Cashmere and the Himalayas, being covered with long whity-brown hair. He had received eleven wounds, six of which were in the head ; but I found that the round leaden balls from my smooth-bore had flattened on the skull without penetrating, whilst the conical projectile from my rifle splintered the bone. By the time the skin was taken off, the carcase cut up, and the flesh divided among the people, the sun had sunk low in the west, and we had to beat a hasty retreat in order to reach our bivouac (the cattle-shed) before nightfall. Here we found a supply of sheep, fowls, and forage had been brought in during our absence ; so, after we had pitched our tents and made the "inner man" comfortable, our battle with the bear was fought over again as we reclined round an immense fire, until some of us began to nod, when we rolled ourselves up in our blankets and turned in for the night, well satisfied with our day's sport.

I was awakened some time before dawn by Kuchuc, who informed me that my baggage-pony and three horses belonging to the Bey's people were missing, and it was suspected that a predatory party of Kabardines, known to be lurking in the neighbourhood, were the culprits, and had paid us a visit in the night.

The loss of a good baggage-animal is, at any time,

a serious inconvenience when travelling; but in a wild and desolate country, like that of the eastern coast of the Black Sea, it is almost an irremediable misfortune, so I jumped up immediately to consult with the Bey as to the best measures to take for the recovery of the stolen property. I found him still encased in sheepskins, but puffing furiously at his chibouk, and giving vent to his indignation in a long string of curses, loud and deep, against the marauders, whom he designated as "vile dogs of Kaffirs (unbelievers) of unchaste parentage," &c.

When I could get in a word, I advised him to send some of his people to follow up the trail as soon as it became light enough to see the marks left by the horses' feet; but he, with true Mussulman apathy, declared that a pursuit would be useless, as the plunderers had got too long a start.

Of this I did not feel at all sure, knowing the extreme difficulty of getting over the ground in the dark, in a wooded country; so I determined to give chase with my own people, accompanied by the herdsman who had shown us the bear's lair the day before, and a couple of young men of the tribe, who professed not only to know the country well, but also imagined they could hit upon the haunts of the cattle-lifters.

Having buried our superfluous baggage, we set off in light marching order as soon as the day broke; and, falling upon the trail almost immediately, followed it up in Indian file, as fast as the rocky nature

of the ground permitted. It appeared that the culprits were six in number, as there were marks of two having remained in charge of six horses some short distance off; whilst four others prowled about our bivouac in search of plunder.

After a fatiguing ride of several hours' duration, over hill and dale, through woods and across rivers, we came to a marshy swamp which bore the appearance of having recently been disturbed by horses' hoofs; so on we pushed with renewed vigour, and I refrained from letting drive at seven gigantic cranes, who, regardless of our presence, continued to wade less than two hundred yards distant, which was a sore temptation, as they appeared of a rare kind, and I would have got them all in line with a little judicious stalking.

There could be no doubt of our being on the track of the right party, as in several places I perceived the trail of my baggage-pony, which was shod with the broad Turkish shoe on the fore-feet, whereas none of the other animals had any. Towards noon, after clambering up the steep rocky side of a low ridge of hills, I perceived, in the ravine below, a light column of smoke curling up from some broken ground; and, after a careful investigation with my field-glass, I saw several horses with their fore-feet hobbled, grazing by the banks of a small stream, which, I had no doubt, belonged to the marauders.

After a brief consultation with my followers, I directed Kuchuc and three others to accompany me

in a reconnaissance, whilst the rest of the party took charge of the horses and kept a look-out on the road. As my men were well armed, and I could fully depend upon their pluck, I did not much fear the result of a contest, but was rather afraid lest the pillagers, knowing the country, might slip through our hands with their booty ; so I struck off from the track, and made a circuitous route by crossing the ravine some distance below the place where I saw the smoke, and again gaining it on the opposite height, from whence, with the aid of my glass, I could see the objects of our search, reclining round a fire, apparently very jolly on the strength of their success.

After having made as careful a survey as the wooded nature of the ground would allow, we advanced towards them as noiselessly as possible, keeping well under cover, until we came to the edge of the open, where the horses were grazing, from whence we got a full view of the party, which appeared to be five in number ; one of whom was washing his mouth in the stream, a second superintending the cooking, and the others smoking and lolling about on the ground, evidently quite unsuspecting of danger.

Knowing the effect of a surprise, I determined, if possible, to accomplish our purpose without bloodshed ; and, observing their rude fire-arms resting against a boulder of rock, I resolved to get as near as possible by stalking, and then make a simultaneous dash.

By dint of creeping on our hands and knees, and taking advantage of the cover of bushes, rocks, and undulations in the ground, we got to within a dozen yards of the three fellows lying down, on whom we made a rush, and, after a momentary struggle, overpowered by laying about us with the butt-end of our rifles. The two others bolted into the jungle on the first alarm, where further pursuit was useless; and a sixth, who was acting as scout a short distance in the rear, fell into the hands of our other party.

Having disarmed and pinioned our prisoners, one of whom had his arm broken in the scuffle, and secured the horses (ten in number, including our own recaptured), we rejoined the rest of the party, and, after a hasty meal, set out on our return.

Our captives, who were a sullen, "ill-favoured, hangdog looking" set of fellows, proved to belong to a mountain-tribe from the other side of Pitzounda, who were returning from an unsuccessful foray in Mingrelia, when they caught sight of our cattle and attempted a *razée*.

We arrived in camp late in the afternoon, and great was the old Bey's joy at the recovery of his animals, which he had made up his mind he would never see again. The prisoners were all recognised as being old offenders; and, according to the law of the tribes, as the mildest punishment, would have been sold as slaves in the interior; but this I would not allow as I intended, by making an example, to deter another attempt being made on my cattle: so

the gang, after branding each of them indelibly with a heated horse-shoe, on the right shoulder, turned them adrift, minus their arms, horses, and kalpacs (high caps of black sheepskin), warning them that they might expect no mercy if found again anywhere near our camp.

The Bey had heard of another bear, and had sent out some of his people to make sure of his whereabouts; but, as the haunt was said to be nearer the "konak" than where we were, it was determined to return there on the morrow. I selected one of the captured horses for my own use, presented another to the Bey, a third to the herdsman who showed me the bear's haunt, and then gave the others, with the captured arms, as prizes to the best marksmen in the tribe.

CHAPTER XXX.

“ Hark ! heard you not the forest monarch’s roar ?
Crashing the lance, he snuffs the spouting gore
Of man and steed, o’erthrown beneath his horn ! ”

CIRCASSIA—*continued.*

On the sale of Circassian females, and extenuating circumstances.—Their character.—An exploring trip premeditated.—The start.—A Russian fort.—Bustard shooting.—Forest scenery.—Difficulties *en route*.—Trout fishing.—Mosquitoes.—A lovely valley.—Wild-cattle hunt.—An awkward predicament.—A bull and cow slain.—Mode of preserving the flesh.—More game afoot.—The ascent of the first range.—Mountain scenery.—Mount El-Bruz in the distance.—Difficult travelling.—A bear started.—A long shot.—Strange feelings.—A frightful chasm, and exciting moment.—Journey along the ridge.—The descent.—Wolves.—A Circassian hamlet.—Hospitality.—A noble race.—A Durbar, and the result of our consultation.

AMONGST the various localities to which erratic fate has directed my steps, there are few that have so many agreeable souvenirs associated in my recollection as Circassia ; and I wonder that more travellers and sportsmen do not turn their wanderings towards a country which although pre-eminent throughout the world for magnificence of scenery, is yet a *terra incognita*. In these days of steam and rail, it were an easy matter for the lover of the picturesque, or the sportsman—instead of forming one of that horde of sight-seers annually discharged on the Continent—to take his lounge one afternoon in Rotten Row, and



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that day fortnight to find himself sipping coffee in the midst of a circle of mountaineers, in one of the romantic gorges of the Caucasus; where a man's worth is not estimated by the length of his pocket, but according to the gifts bestowed upon him by Nature, and the manner in which he makes use of them. Yes, my gentle reader, notwithstanding the tales you may have heard of the barbarity of the Circassians, in selling their daughters to the panders of Osmanli harems, and the maidens' passive apathetic resignation to such a fate, I maintain that it is the force of circumstances alone that has brought this revolting custom about. It must be remembered that the gallant tribes of the mountains have been engaged in a bloody war, against fearful odds, for the last eighty years: consequently there has been a continual drain upon the male population—the number of men falling annually in battle against the invaders far exceeding the number of male children born. Such having been the case for nearly a century, naturally enough there is a great disproportion between the sexes, and, notwithstanding that polygamy exists, it is a matter of difficulty for all the “gentler sex” to obtain protectors; and, as “*antiquated spinsters*” are of a genus unknown in the Caucasus, it is not to be wondered at that the inhabitants are willing to dispose of their extra produce, not required for home consumption, to the Turks; who make good husbands, are of the same faith, and much akin in habits and manners. The

custom of admitting foreigners and prisoners of war into the tribes, was doubtless adopted in order to make up for the loss of men killed in battle, and not from any great partiality towards strangers. During my sojourn in the country—to which time my mind often reverts as being the happiest of my life—I found that, among these unsophisticated people, the possession of large hoards of the “yellow metal” does not constitute the value of the man; and the most beautiful maidens of the world estimate their lovers’ worth by the qualities they display—not their possessions. There, a bold spirit, a cool head in the time of danger, a good shot, a skilful horseman, and a strong arm that can defend his own, is looked upon as a rich man and a suitable “partie;” if, withal, he possesses a kind heart, nothing more is required to make a home happy in Circassia. But, Heigh Allah! I must check myself upon such subjects, and put the curb upon my pen, or it will run upon other reminiscences of the past than those connected with “The Hunting Grounds.”

I had passed many happy days in the konak of the Bey and amongst other friendly tribes, when, one afternoon, as I was returning from a successful deer-stalking expedition, I fell in with a young mountaineer who was *en route* to his home, close to Mount El-Bruz. After some conversation, I made up my mind to take a trip to that part of the country, under his guidance, and, if possible, to make an ascent of the “Father of Mountains.” The same evening I

communicated my intention to my followers, who made their preparations accordingly ; and the next morning, after quite a tender leave-taking from our worthy host and his people, to whom we promised to return, a start was effected. For the first four or five miles after leaving the konak, we had the advantage of a bridle-path, which had been formed many years ago by the Russians, for the purpose of keeping up a communication with one of their outposts, a small fort, or rather redoubt, constructed on an isolated hill which commanded the entrance of a deeply-wooded gorge. The work, in which embrasures and platforms for eight pieces of cannon were still visible, had evidently been intended to prevent the aggressive incursions of the mountain tribes, but it did not appear to have been inhabited for some years, as the barrack was roofless and the flagstaff had rotted away. Our guide told me that this had been the scene of many a hard conflict between the Muscovite troops and the mountaineers, and his statement was confirmed by the numerous graves, some of which were marked by tombstones bearing Greek or Russian inscriptions, and others by rude wooden crosses.

On the slope and round the base of the hill were clearings in the low scrub-jungle, which at one time had evidently been fenced in and cultivated, having perhaps served the garrison as pasture-lands and corn-fields. As I was taking a sketch of the little stronghold from one of these places, the "Hadjee" informed me that he had seen several very large

birds go down in a patch of low jungle close at hand. From his description I imagined that they were cranes, having seen several of a very large species wading in a swamp *en route*, and, being desirous of obtaining a specimen, I loaded my gun with a couple of Eley's green long-range cartridges, and accompanied him to the spot where he had marked the birds alight. I had beaten about the place for some time without seeing anything, and was about to give up the pursuit, when, as I was turning round a low copse, a covey of bustard (*Otis tarda*) suddenly got up from a small undulating plain, close to a watercourse, and I had the good fortune to bring down a couple of them, right and left, before they could get fairly upon the wing. One, a hen, fell dead, the shot having taken effect in the back part of the head and neck; but the second, a fine old cock, was only winged, and ran at an immense pace. Luckily "El Moro," my pointer, attracted by the report of my gun, came up and assisted me; otherwise I should have had no chance of catching him, notwithstanding I was in fair running condition. He proved to be a splendid specimen, the wings measuring more than four feet and a half from tip to tip. His weight I imagined to have been but little short of forty pounds, as he was in excellent condition, and by far the largest bird of the species I have hitherto seen, although I have killed many on the plains in India.

Having dined, we started again *en route*, and, on

leaving the fort, made our way along tracks with which both Cassim and our guide appeared familiar, but which it would have been hazardous for a stranger to have attempted to follow without the aid of an experienced guide, as the country is so intersected by innumerable watercourses, meandering through dense labyrinths of wood, each of which so closely resembles the other that a traveller, once bewildered, could hardly ever extricate himself, landmarks of any kind being few and far between. Now and then even our guide appeared puzzled, and had to climb some huge boulder of rock, or lofty tree, in order to make sure of the route, by observing the appearance of the mountains which formed the horizon of this sea of woods. On such occasions as these, had I not been an old forest-ranger accustomed to pilot my way by compass through trackless woods, I might perhaps have shared in the feelings of some of my followers, who, from time to time, showed symptoms of uneasiness as we wandered through apparently boundless depths of forest. The route was wild in the extreme, often leading across long extents of marshes, unhealthy swamps, and innumerable small rivers and streams, which our horses were generally able to ford, but sometimes had to swim. Now and then we had a good deal of trouble to cross, on account of the force of the current; and on one occasion we nearly lost one of our number, who got into a quicksand, and was only saved by our throwing him branches, with which he supported

himself until we managed to draw him out with a rope.

We rode for ten or twelve miles along the base of thickly-wooded hills, until we came to a good-sized stream, running between high steep banks, fringed in places with willow and large trees, somewhat resembling the sycamore, which our guide informed us was a branch of the River Kodor, the same we had forded near the embouchure, when accompanying the Turkish army from Suchum Kaleh. Here we determined to bivouac; and, whilst my people were engaged in culinary operations, I strolled up the river with Ahmed and Kuchuc, on the look-out for a chance shot at deer, as I had seen a few slots during our march. Suddenly turning round a bend in the river, I observed some smoke a short distance ahead, which, after a careful reconnaissance, we approached, and found a party of Abbasians catching fish in ingenious traps made of willow, which are laid in the most likely places in the stream. They had upwards of two dozen very fine fish, chiefly trout, which seemed exactly to resemble the English species, being formed and speckled without any distinguishable difference. I got two glorious fellows, weighing about five pounds each, in exchange for a silver quarter-franc piece, which made a welcome addition to our supper. Our camp this night appeared to be the head-quarters of the mosquito tribes, for they settled upon us in myriads, keeping up a perpetual hum, and not allowing a moment's

rest. It was positively amusing, at times, to hear the exclamations and growling of some of the people who were driven almost wild with continued torture. Strange to say, they scarcely molested me, although the faces of some of the others were much swollen by the multiplicity of their stings. With those, sleep was out of the question; so they made a huge fire, round which they got some relief.

Sunrise saw us again *en route*, and after a most delightful ride of about ten miles up the river, through glorious woods of gigantic oak, beech, and walnut, or glades of rich, nutritious grasses, we entered a most picturesque valley, which, for beauty of scenery and rich fertility, far exceeded anything that I had hitherto seen. On each side rose densely-wooded hills, here and there broken into gorgeously-coloured cliffs and dark winding ravines; whilst every turn displayed lovely vistas, stately avenues, groves of blossoming shrubs, clumps of gigantic forest-trees covered with festoons of the wild vine, and green slopes clothed with delicious verdure: forming a park-like scene far surpassing any of our finest demesnes in Old England.

As I looked around, I noticed many objects that brought "home scenes" vividly to mind, for, amongst the vegetation indigenous to southern climes, I noticed the wild plum, cherry, white-thorn, daisy, clover, larkspur, primrose, violet, and forget-me-not; besides which the full round notes of the blackbird and the warbling of the missel-thrush were heard

high above the melody of the other sylvan choristers. An exclamation of surprise from Ahmed recalled me from this very agreeable reverie, directing my attention into a widely different channel, for, on passing close to a small piece of dense cover, I distinctly heard the snapping of sticks, followed by the tread of some heavy animal over dry vegetation, and almost immediately a mighty wild-bull and three cows tore across the plain. To loosen my rifle and spring from my saddle was the work of a moment, and, taking a steady aim, I planted one bullet in his hind-quarter, the only part visible, as he was bolting away, and the second in his broad massive shoulder as he swerved round on receiving the first wound. This last made him bite the dust; but he soon regained his legs, and with a loud bellow and roar of rage made direct for the opposite height. I immediately gave chase, and, after a sharp burst, got up alongside my quarry, from whose side a stream of blood was spurting as he ran. Drawing my revolver from my holster, I aimed behind the ear; but my horse, being fidgety and not accustomed to such kind of work, shied round at the moment, and the shot did not take effect. In the twinkling of an eye, before I could recock the pistol, or get my horse out of his way, the bull charged, rolling us both over from the violence of the shock, and falling himself on his knees with the exertion. Luckily, although my horse was slightly gored in the shoulder, I was not in the least hurt with the purl; and before my antagonist could repeat

his little game I sprang to my feet, and plunging my long hunting-knife into his chest, he staggered forward a few paces, and dropped on his side dead. In the meantime my followers gave chase to the rest of the herd, and a young cow, in first-rate condition for the table, fell after a desperate charge, in which she unhorsed one or two of their number, although without doing any serious damage. These cattle, which much resemble in appearance the largest of our Scotch oxen, generally go in herds of eight or ten, and the people of the country say that they are the most formidable animals in the forest, neither the bear nor the wolf ever daring to meddle with them. The bull I killed (which was the only one seen during my sojourn in that part—although we several times came across their trails) was a most savage-looking brute, having an immensely broad chest, deep shoulders, muscular fore-arms, short thick curved horns, and large dewlap. The general colour was black, with dirty white under the belly and inside the thighs and legs, and the height at the shoulder nearly sixteen hands.

Having now much more flesh than we could consume before it became tainted, I thought it advisable to halt where we were and “jerk” some of the meat, which we did, by cutting it in strips and hanging it for several hours over a large wood-fire. We grilled some steaks on the embers almost before they became cold, and to my surprise they were remarkably tender. We salted the tongues as well as we could, keeping them for the ascent, and the marrow Hoossain made

into pasties that would have excited the admiration of poor old Soyer himself. During the night our fire attracted some deer ; but Ali, who first perceived them and fired a couple of shots, could not manage to bag any, although they did not go away unscathed, as when day broke blood was found upon their trail, which we did not follow up, as it led in a contrary direction to our route.

For some hours our course lay parallel to and almost on the same level as the bed of the stream ; but it now began to ascend gradually, and at last we found ourselves scrambling up the face of a steep scarped cliff, from a chasm in the base of which the torrent burst, as it were, from the womb of the mountain. Our guide evidently knew the country well, for the route was admirably chosen, and he led us up the steepest ascents with an easy inclination that would have done credit to the most able engineer. The surface of the rock, without being so very smooth as to render our horses' footing insecure, presented no very serious obstacle, so that we got on famously, and by noon reached a natural clearing in the woods, carpeted with rich indigenous grasses and flowers of the most delicate tints, and intersected with numerous small streams of crystal clearness that flowed in little murmuring cascades down the side of the mountain.

We continued to ascend until dusk, when we encamped for the night under the lee of a huge mass of black granite, which exposure to the weather had made as smooth as if it had been artificially polished.

Rising with the sun, the following morning, and invigorated by the bracing air, we gained the tableland on the summit, after a tramp of about four hours' duration.

It was from this spot that we got the first uninterrupted view of the mighty El-Bruz, on whose snow-clad summit the sky seemed to rest. It appeared so distinctly defined that I did not imagine it was more than fifteen miles off, and was much surprised when our guide assured me that it was nearly twelve *saat*, or about three times that distance.

Our route now became much more difficult for the horses, as we had to make our way for several miles in an easterly direction along the tortuous ridge of this range, sometimes clambering up craggy cliffs so steep, that every moment I was afraid of my horse losing his balance and falling backwards with me, and at other times having to descend rocky slopes and ledges with scarcely any inequalities in their surface to afford foot-hold. Often the men had infinite trouble with their animals before they could get them to attempt some of the descents; and frequently one of them, slipping, would come sliding against the rest, knocking others off their legs, which it required great exertion and floundering to regain. I took care to avoid such accidents by keeping well ahead; but sometimes even my horse, which was remarkable for its sure-footedness, would come on to his knees and remain a fixture, fearing, if he stirred, to roll down the whole way. We avoided all the higher peaks,

which were covered with snow, and tried to preserve our level as much as possible, although at times we traversed valleys so walled in that the rays of the sun could never penetrate except at noonday. As we were descending a steep ravine of this kind, Abdulla pointed out to me an enormous bear scrambling, hand over hand, up the stumps and bush on the other side; and, jumping off my horse, I made use of a slab of rock as a rest, and gave him both barrels simultaneously. Although the distance was nearly five hundred yards, my shots evidently took effect, for he rolled over several times before he could regain his legs, when he looked fiercely around and growled most savagely. I hastily reloaded, but he had in the meantime given leg-bail, so I directed two of the gang to remain where we were, to mark the place and direct me in case I should not be able to make straight for it, and then gave chase. It was no easy work to scramble up the rocky slope; but at last we got on his trail, and soon found gouts of blood which, although not sufficient to lead me to suppose that he was mortally wounded, proved that my shots, even at that long range, had taken effect. As the trail diverged considerably from our route, we gave up the pursuit; and, after halting a short time to cook a meal by a beautiful stream, gushing out of the live rock, the water of which was so cold that it gave me a violent toothache, again pushed forward.

After a weary march and much slipping and scrambling over most difficult ground, we ascended

from a ravine to an elevated ridge covered with stunted grass, along which we travelled ten or twelve miles, enjoying a magnificent prospect on each hand of apparently boundless ranges of snow-capped mountains and interminable forest. An inexpressible feeling of silent contemplation and awe seemed to pervade the entire company, as we rode along for miles without exchanging an observation; indeed, the solemn silence of uninvaded nature gave birth to strange emotions bordering on fear, which seemed inexplicable, considering the scenes that each and every one of my party had gone through.

From this we ascended a ridge of high rocks, in some places covered with low scrub, where we encamped for the night, as we found some difficulty in crossing a mountain-torrent that came tumbling over a bed of huge boulders of green and black granite with a roar like thunder.

The next morning, having crossed this obstruction, we clambered over the last crest of the mountain, a deep valley only lying between us and the El-Bruz, and commenced our descent in single file by a long spur, along the back or ridge of which we pursued our course for some miles without any feeling of insecurity, as the sides, though steep, were densely wooded, and obscured the terrors of the view. Suddenly, as we were skirting a scarped cliff, we came to a sharp angle where we had to pass a narrow ledge or shelf jutting out of the live rock, on which there was scarcely room for a goat to turn. I was leading,

my horse being the most sure-footed, but here he stopped dead short with a strange snort and shudder, that first made me feel the imminence of my danger, throwing out his legs as if bent upon going no further. A foaming river was roaring some hundreds of feet below, so that we could hardly hear ourselves speak; and if I could I would have dismounted to reconnoitre, but this was perfectly impossible. I could not turn, and must advance; but *auri sacra fames, quid non mortalia pectora cogis?* What looked impossible was soon made practicable. Delay was dangerous, so I loosened the reins, gently urged my horse forward, and at the same time gave him the spur. With a grunt of despair, and eyes distended, he craned his neck forward, and, after a fearful effort, managed to gain a place where the pass became broader, when he broke out into a profuse perspiration from terror. As soon as I was able to draw a full breath I ordered my followers to dismount and go over first, leading their horses with a cord, in which manner all managed to get over safely. It was an anxious moment, and I do not think any inducement would cause me to repeat the feat; for, although a fearless horseman, and endued with a sailor's eye, my heart often palpitates when I think of that perilous scramble.

We continued to descend until nearly dusk, when we halted for the night in the dense forest that clothes the lower spurs of these mountains, lighting huge fires to keep away the wolves, which kind of "vermin" were to be met with in packs, and bears'

tracks were not at all uncommon. Frequently during the night we were alarmed by their infernal howling close at hand, but they did not dare to approach our fire. The next morning we got into the plain, and towards noon arrived at a Circassian konak, where we were made extremely welcome, more especially when our guide, who was well known in the hamlet, told them that I was an Englishman who had fought against the Russians, both in the Crimea and in Asia Minor, for at first they had taken me for one of "*the Faithful*." A comfortable log-hut was placed at my disposal, with a shed for the horses, and Hoossain obtained a bountiful supply of fowls, eggs, corn-flour, and half a sheep, which was soon converted into a savoury mess. After we had refreshed the inner man, we held a "durbar," at which all the elders, and indeed most of the inhabitants of the hamlet attended; and never, either in civilized or savage life, have I seen a finer-looking race than the specimens then before me. The men were all of noble stature, stalwart and muscular to a degree, with highly intelligent countenances and strikingly handsome features, the lower part of which were generally covered with long flowing beards. The women were extremely beautiful, with finely-chiselled features, lustrous eyes, and pearly teeth, which they disclosed in gracious and fascinating smiles, that lighted up their faces with the most bewitching radiance. They wore no head-dress, generally speaking, except their luxuriant tresses, which flowed in unconfined freedom over

their shoulders; although during my stay among them I noticed some in jaunty-looking scarlet caps. Their hands were beautiful, and when they walked, their flowing drapery revealed the exquisite symmetry of their legs and feet, which throughout the world are unrivalled. We all sat down in a semicircle in front of the door of my hut, the women a little distance behind the men, and, after Hoossain and Abdulla had served the greater part of the assembly with coffee, "chibouks" were lighted, when, with an air of great ceremony, I commenced a speech in Turkish, eked out with Hindostanee, which was translated by Abdulla for the benefit of that part of my audience who could not understand the former language.

I explained my views, announcing my intention of exploring the El-Bruz (which I could see caused supercilious smiles amongst some of the party), and finished off by presenting the chief with a pair of brass-mounted pistols, a looking-glass, some scarlet cloth, and a piece of gold-lace for his harem. Although evidently much pleased with my little attention—for he was profuse in his thanks and offers of service—he shook his head and looked grave when I again brought the El-Bruz on the *tapis*, assuring me that the ascent was impossible, not only on account of the depth of snow, but also because it was inhabited by evil spirits, such as "gins," "afrits," and "gholes," who would not allow any mortal to penetrate into their sanctuaries. I made light of his fears,

repeating the Mussulman creed—" *La ilaha ila Allah, Mahomed Rasoul Allah* "—and declared that I would make the attempt even if I knew the place to be the haunt of all the shytons of Jehanum.* This was a "clincher," and after some discussion between Ishmael (our guide), Cassim, and some of the elders of the tribe, it was settled that two of their number should accompany us, as they knew more about the mountain than any one else, having been obliged at one time to take refuge there when pursued by a predatory hostile party. These gave me to understand that there was a deserted konak some distance up the mountain, up to which point our horses could go, so I resolved to make the necessary preparations that evening, and start for the place early the next morning. What little superfluous baggage I had I left in charge of the chief, and then ordered Hoossain, Kuchuc, and Cassim to accompany me with the two young men of the tribe, as I did not care to have too many about me, and the rest were to take charge of the horses at the foot of the mountain.

This being arranged, and provisions, ropes, blankets, and waterproof sheeting being packed and divided, so that each had about equal weight, I had poles cut so as to serve as "alpen-stocks;" and early the next morning we started, accompanied for a short distance by the greater part of the tribe, who wished us God-speed and good-luck on our undertaking. After a ride of about six hours' duration through the woods

* Shytans of Jehanum—demons of the infernal regions.

we began to ascend, and in the afternoon arrived at the deserted konak, which was situated on a projecting spur. Here we put up for the night, making ourselves as comfortable as possible; Ali and his party keeping watch whilst mine slept, so as to be fresh for work on the morrow. All my followers wanted to accompany me, but it could not be; so, after a plentiful breakfast, we bade them adieu, and set out on our perilous expedition.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“ Beyond, a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwinds and dire hail.”—MILTON.

THE ASCENT OF MOUNT EL-BRUZ.

Forest scenery.—The first halt.—A glacier.—A beautiful panorama.—Sunrise.—A lammergeier slain.—Glacier travelling.—Eternal snow.—Avalanches.—The lower summit attained.—Our exultation.—A description of the higher summit.—The impossibility of reaching it.—Grand scenery.—Intense glare.—The descent commenced.—A sudden death.—Kuchuc's last resting-place.—Fatiguing fag.—The bivouac in the pine forest.—An ibex killed.—Return.—Finale.

THE forest glowed with the most vivid autumn tints; the foliage of the different trees exhibiting every shade, from the brightest orange to the deepest red; and contrasted strangely with the peculiarly rich colouring of masses of rocks here and there intermingled, forming a picture, of Nature's painting, which surpassed all the efforts of an artist to depict. Ferns nearly six feet in height, and of a species I had not previously seen, grew in the greatest profusion, whilst indigenous myrtle, box, laurel, rhododendron, and gigantic heath-bushes, grew in the greatest profusion on every side. The ground was carpeted with the most exquisitely beautiful flowers, amongst which I noticed bracken (*Pteris aquilina*) of a deep orange colour, blue, purple, and white monkshood, heath-

bells, columbine, anemones, forget-me-nots, pansies, ranunculi, violets, and a delicate-looking creeper with scarlet bloom, which grew amid the rocks, most of which were covered with mosses of every hue and shade. After several hours' severe toil, the appearance of the forest became very much changed; the oak, beech, sycamore, poplar, walnut, chestnut, ash, birch, and other trees of the plains, giving place to lofty pines, covered with many-coloured lichen, larch, and gigantic cedars, some of which, evidently of a great age, had at last succumbed to the violence of the storms, for many were lying prostrate. Day was now drawing to a close, so we began to make the necessary preparations for passing the night, which were not difficult to men like mine, the greater part of whose lives had been spent in the open air. Following up a foaming torrent that came tumbling down the side of the mountain, over huge boulders of granite, with a roar like thunder, we came to a cleft in the rocks, which was soon converted into a fortress impregnable to either bears or wolves, the only assailants likely to be found in these wild regions. Our blankets and waterproofs were unrolled, and we were soon all reclining round the blazing logs of an immense camp-fire, on the side of which two brass kettles, containing our evening repast, were bubbling away merrily. Mine were a motley crew, a rough and reckless lot of desperate men, of different race and creeds, bound by no tie, and heeding no law, yet perfect unanimity existed

amongst them. Wild songs were sung, strange tales were told; and many a hoarse peal of merriment rang through the night air, as the jest went round. Loudly they laughed, and little they recked for the morrow. The moon was nearly at the full, and her silver light made the open parts of the forest as clear as day; but I set the watch early, and bade my followers take what repose they could, as I knew that they would have a hard fag on the morrow.

The queen of the night was still high in the heavens, when we began to make preparations for a start by packing up our baggage in the smallest space possible, and, after a cup of hot coffee and *eau de vie* to keep out the night air, we were again *en route*. We soon left the forest behind, and, after crossing a belt of dwarf pine with an undergrowth of savin and juniper bushes almost waist-high, we came to a wilderness of rocks and beetling crags; having every now and then to clamber up steep slopes covered with huge boulders of granite and masses of fallen *débris*, which were readily set in motion. We were obliged to be very careful and ascend like skirmishers in extended order, as, every few yards we went, huge fragments came rolling down, which would have caused severe injury had they struck any of us. After several hours' severe toil we clambered a ridge of broken rocks piled on each other in great confusion, which up to this time had entirely hidden the higher part of the mountain, and the overwhelming sublimity of the scene that then broke upon our

view for the first time amply compensated for the fatigue we had undergone. We had reached the edge of a huge glacier, which, like a mighty river suddenly frozen, appeared to flow down a gorge in the side of the mountain, and extended for some miles both above and below the ridge on which we were standing. Dense foliage and huge masses of rock intervening, had prevented our getting a glimpse of it before, notwithstanding we had attained an altitude much above the lower part, which seemed to have cleft its way far into the heart of the forest.

The panorama from this point was magnificent, for at the end of the glacier, which in some parts was dazzling white, and in others of the colours of the sapphire and the amethyst—where it appeared to blend with masses of eternal snow, rose the stupendous summit of the “Father of Mountains,” towering in silent majesty like a glittering mass of cold alabaster. Seating ourselves on a smooth slab of rock, we spent some time in gazing on the surpassingly-beautiful scene spread below and around, and I made a futile attempt to sketch it; but it was labour under difficulties, for the cold became so intense that I could scarcely hold my pencil, and had to jump and caper about every moment in order to prevent my limbs from becoming benumbed. Besides this, the longer the eye dwelt upon the scene the vaster and more magnificent became its gigantic and stately proportions; and again and again I put down my pencil, feeling the impossibility of doing justice to it.

At last, after a great deal of patience, I managed to complete a tolerably correct outline, which I filled in with the aid of my glass, endeavouring at the same time to impress the scene so correctly on my mind that not a single important feature should be forgotten.

Whilst so employed, the rays of the rising sun were just beginning to tinge the summits of the loftiest ranges on the eastern horizon (where our guide pointed out to me Mount Kasbek towering high above the rest), and by degrees each peak, precipice and ridge assumed a delicate rose-colour, which deepened every moment until it became tinged with a gorgeous golden tint that gradually paled as the glorious luminary of day ascended in the heavens, when after a short time the virgin snow was again left in its unsullied whiteness.

No description could convey an idea of the intense grandeur of the scene before us, which displayed a richness of colouring far surpassing the painter's art to depict. Mountains divided by deep, dark, densely-wooded ravines lay beneath us, and the valley from which we commenced the ascent was bathed in a rich violet hue. Castellated peaks and masses of rock of every shape and form rose in all directions, and many foaming torrents and cascades glistened like silver on the rugged sides of the mountain. The only sounds that broke the intense silence that reigned over the whole face of nature, were the roaring of distant avalanches, the melancholy cry of the eagle, or the shrill whistle of the marmot as, alarmed at

our intrusion on his domains, he scrambled into his burrow under the rocks.

The bracing freshness of the air and the magnificence of the scenery had the effect of enduing us all with an exuberant overflow of joyous animation and exhilaration of spirits, as for several minutes we amused ourselves in testing our strength by seeing who could throw furthest over the glacier, or hurl the largest fragments of rock down the steep slope. Whilst so amusing ourselves, a pair of immense lammergeier came soaring over our heads. I immediately unslung my rifle, which I carried across my back, and let drive a couple of shots, but both were without effect, the distance being too great. A lucky thought flashed across my mind which I immediately put into execution. I took a red silk pocket-handkerchief, and, fastening a stone in the centre, I threw it into the air several times; and when I saw that it had attracted their attention, I threw it as far as I could down the slope before me. It hardly fell when both made a swoop towards it, and came well within distance. I threw up my rifle, hit the leading bird hard with the first barrel, and brought him down with the second; but I had a difficult task to get to him, as the descent was very precipitous and covered with loose stones and shingle. He proved to be a magnificent specimen, his wings measuring nearly ten feet from tip to tip. I plucked out his wing-feathers and cut off the head and claws as trophies, but I had not time to take his skin, which

I felt extremely sorry for. Whilst engaged in this task, the female kept hovering round about, uttering strange, sad cries, and several times I thought she would have attacked me, so I gave her a shot which made her go to the right-about.

We now clambered down upon the glacier, which by its appearance from the height would, I thought, prove easier travelling than along the craggy side of the mountain; but I soon found out my mistake, as the surface, which I imagined to be tolerably even, proved undulating, rugged, and much broken up by crevices and chasms of immense depth and perpendicular wall-like sides, which varied from a few inches to many yards in width. After a wearisome tramp of about a mile, we came to a line of masses of rock, piled one upon another, over which we had great difficulty in making our way. As these obstructions appeared frequent, and we lost much ground by seeking to avoid fissures that we dared not leap, I determined to return once more to the rocky ramparts on the side, and, after a difficult climb, was once again on *terra firma*, and felt more at home than on the surface of the glacier, whose continual cracking, creaking, and heaving, made us feel nervous lest it might open directly under our feet and engulf us, which seemed very possible, as we twice saw the ice sink, give way, and tear asunder, forming fearful yawning chasms of unknown depths.

After several hours' continued exertion we got to an altitude high above the head of the glacier, and

the aspect of the scenery became entirely changed; deep snow lay in all the gorges and ravines, and no vegetation was seen except here and there a patch of gentian or a few flowers of such intensely-brilliant blue that they seemed to reflect the colour of the sky overhead. The slope of the ridge up which we made our way was furrowed with deep fissures and gullies, presenting a stern and monotonous appearance, and here and there covered with huge, shapeless boulders of detached granite, piled one upon another in wild confusion. A strange depressing sense of desolation and dismal solitude reigned in this wilderness of rocks and beetling crags: even our voices seemed to re-echo with a strange unearthly sound. After a fatiguing climb up a narrow fissure in the mountain, filled with loose stones and fragments of rock, that rolled from under the feet at every step, we gained a grass-covered slope, which, although steep, afforded great relief after our fag up the bed of the watercourse. As we plodded along we saw a troop of ibex scampering along a craggy ridge many hundred feet below us, yet the air was so rare that we distinctly heard the clatter of their hoofs against the rocks and the rolling of the pebbles they displaced, and shortly afterwards we saw a flight of butterflies that followed our course for some distance, frequently alighting on our persons. The ibex were the last we saw of animal life; flowers became extremely rare, and no insects were to be seen, for very shortly afterwards we reached the eternal snow, which, to our

surprise, proved far easier travelling than the naked rock.

We now tied ourselves together with ropes provided for the purpose, allowing about ten feet between each man, which proved a very necessary precaution, as every now and again one or another of our number would sink up to his middle in holes concealed by the snow; notwithstanding we endeavoured to find them out by sounding the way with our staves. For several hours we continued to make our way up the height, only stopping for a moment now and then to refresh ourselves with a mouthful of brandy, until at last we all of us began to feel more or less affected with a difficulty in breathing, more particularly Kuchuc, the Nubian, who was by far the most powerful man amongst us. 'This feeling wore off after a time, returning at intervals; and the extreme elasticity and pureness of the air prevented us from then feeling the fatigue attendant on our continued exertions. I myself, although often breathless from floundering in the snow, did not at any time feel exhausted: a few minutes' rest would recruit my strength, and excitement keep me from flagging.

The only interruption to the solemn silence that reigned in that high altitude was the continual rumbling and roaring of avalanches, from which at times our route became extremely dangerous. Once I thought it would be all up with us, as the entire side of the mountain seemed to be giving way, and an enormous mass, containing thousands of tons of

earth and rock, came tearing past us with a roar far exceeding that of the artillery at Sevastopol, increasing in velocity, and overwhelming everything in its course. It was a moment pregnant with peril, more especially as, immediately afterwards, huge boulders of rock and *débris* broke away and came spinning down the slope, as if the invisible gigantic fiends who are said to reside in these regions were playing at bowls. However, my companions were Mussulmen and fatalists, and—if my long residence in the East had not imbued me with the same feelings—I was reckless and insensible to fear, for as soon as the storm had passed we continued our route. Another long and tedious fag, and we had attained our object, for we stood upon the “*lower bluff*” of the summit of the El-Bruz, being most likely the first of the human race who had ever set foot upon it.

It was a moment of intense gratification, far surpassing every preconceived idea, for the panorama that suddenly burst upon our eyes was so grand, so overpoweringly sublime, that inexpressible feelings of awe and strange emotions, impossible to define, seemed to pervade the whole of our number. I was the first to scramble up, and gave vent to the exuberance of my exhilaration by a loud huzza, the Briton’s cry,

“Whene’er” his “soul is up and pulse beats high—
Whether it hail the wine-cup or the fight,
And bid each arm be strong or bid each heart be light.”

It is heard when he expresses his devotion and greets his queen;—it rings through the air in the van of the fight, above the pealing of death-shots or the shrieks of the dying;—it is the shout of victory when the field is won, and may be heard round the social board when friend meets friend and the glorious past is brought to mind. It rang throughout the country as the final adieu of thousands as they marched to embark for the seat of war, and after a lapse of years it was re-echoed by the few who returned, covered with wounds and honour, but broken down in health and spirits, when they were welcomed home by their sovereign and grateful countrymen. Gentle reader, my voice has swelled that cry on all of these occasions, but never did it burst from my bosom with such an intense feeling of satisfaction without alloy as when I first placed foot upon the mighty El-Bruz.

I mounted a heap of rocks that lay piled in confusion along a craggy ridge jutting out of the snow, as it appeared to be the highest point, and surveyed at leisure the wonderful scene before me. The higher summit still towered like a mass of sparkling alabaster some three thousand feet above the crest upon which I was standing, but even had the day not been so far advanced I could not have made any attempt to reach it, as a scarped precipice over six hundred feet in depth, an inaccessible glacier, and a ridge of bluff peaks divided us, although it looked almost within the range of my rifle. Could I even have descended and

made a circuit of the lower summit, the glacier was an obstacle that would have been insurmountable, as in it were stupendous icebergs and wave upon wave of precipitous ridges with steep scarped sides, apparently inaccessible to the foot of man, which gave me the idea of numberless rocky islands in a tempestuous ocean suddenly frozen. In the valleys and undulations between were innumerable blue and violet streaks, which, with the aid of my glass, I made out to be deep fissures and yawning chasms so wide as to appear perfectly impassable, although some seemed arched over with natural bridges of ice. Here and there, scattered over the surface, masses of rock and fantastically-grouped aiguilles and pinnacles appeared like the domes, spires, and minarets of far-distant eastern cities, whilst the massive ridges of ice forcibly reminded me of lines of defence and fortifications on the largest scale, the effect of which was somewhat heightened by the continual cracking and breaking of the ice, which often resembled a well-kept-up file-firing, varied by rolling volleys of musketry, whilst at intervals the roaring of avalanches sounded like salvoes of heavy artillery.

Those who have not witnessed, cannot conceive the solemn grandeur of the scene then before us, and description can convey but a very faint idea of it. The firmament was of that intensely deep blue peculiar to the waves of the Mediterranean at certain times, and contrasted strangely with the dazzling

whiteness of the eternal snow, which lay spread out like the vast winding-sheet of a dead world. The sun, too, shone with a peculiarly strange unearthly light, more like that of the moon, as if his rays were not sufficiently powerful to penetrate the atmosphere. For some time I was too much bewildered and overpowered by emotion to fix my mind attentively on the grand panorama stretched before me, but after a time I distinguished, in the south-east, the lofty peak of Mount Kasbec, towering high above ranges of mountains, rising one behind another, and diversified with the richest colouring. To the westward, overlooking the ranges of mountains we had passed, lay the blue expanse of the Euxine, glistening in the light of the sun like a sheet of burnished silver; and far away, in a north-easterly direction, over fields of eternal snow, vast glaciers, and a sea of mountain-ranges, intersected by deep, dark, densely-wooded ravines, were the plains of the Kuban, veined by shining rivers. To the south-east, on the verge of the horizon, was a dense mist, which, notwithstanding the distance, I have no doubt hung over the Caspian. It was a glorious sight; and I remained gazing as long as I could endure the biting cold, notwithstanding that I felt half blinded by the strange reflection of the sun from the snow, for the broad peak of my hunting-cap had no effect in keeping out the glare; and we were each obliged to fasten a strip of my silk handkerchief across our eyes, in order to enable us to see the way. Having re-fastened the ropes, we com-

menced the descent, and had made our way a considerable distance down the first ridge, by following our own tracks, when suddenly I heard a cry of alarm behind, and simultaneously felt the cord jerk. I turned and saw Hoossain supporting the Nubian, who was stretched senseless on the snow. At first I thought he was in a fit, and rubbed his forehead with snow; but, on further examination, I found breathing suspended, the pulse and heart still, and I knew all was over. I always carried a knife in which there was a lancet; so I opened the veins in his arms and temples, but could hardly squeeze out a drop of blood. He was dead, and I believe the cause to have been an affection of the heart. It was a melancholy end to our hitherto successful enterprise, but nothing could be done. We unfastened the cord which attached him to the others, and laid him gently down to take his last sleep, on a ledge of rock, where his body would remain as undisturbed as if buried in the deepest grave, for we were still far above any indications of animal life. After a long, weary tramp, we regained the ridge of rocks overlooking the glacier, by which time the sun was nearly down; and we had to wait some time before the moon got sufficiently high to light us on our way. Once we missed the track, and found ourselves clambering up the smooth face of a rock, where a false step or a slip would have precipitated us into a dark yawning chasm below, so deep that we could not hear huge rocks, which we saw rolling down the

slope, when they struck the bottom. Luckily it was a gloriously clear night, and the moon shone with a brilliancy rarely seen, except in the tropics. Now and then a meteor darted across the firmament, leaving a long train of light after it, and then vanished from our sight.

At last we reached the first vegetation, and towards midnight entered a belt of pine-forest, where we felt so utterly done up with fatigue that we were obliged to halt. After some trouble we made a huge fire, and, having divided what brandy we had left amongst us, rolled ourselves up in our blankets, too tired even to eat or prepare coffee. Towards morning, having somewhat recovered, I felt ravenous, and, although so stiff that I could hardly crawl, managed to awake Hoossain, who got some water and made coffee, which, with biscuits and the remains of our provisions, once more set us on our legs.

We did not, however, think of moving until the sun was high in the heavens. As we were skirting the belt of pines, endeavouring to find out our old track, I caught sight of a magnificent solitary old buck ibex, perched on a peak some short distance below us, and, after some careful stalking, managed to roll him over. He proved a splendid specimen; his coat being very silky, nearly white, and fifteen inches in length. His horns measured thirty-four inches. I cut off his head and skin, and we made the best of our way to the deserted konak, where we

arrived just before sunset. We all lay down round the fire, whilst Ali and his party prepared our food, and, after a long sleep, got up much refreshed, though still fearfully stiff; indeed, that feeling did not entirely wear off for a fortnight.

Towards noon we mounted our horses and rode into the hamlet, where the old chief welcomed us as if we had risen from the dead. Here we remained a few days to recruit, and had every reason to be highly satisfied with our stay, for we were most hospitably treated by the whole tribe.

We then returned to our old friend the Illori Bey, with whom we passed a merry week; after which we made our way to Souchum Kaleh, where we embarked in a steamer for Constantinople.

PART III.—FIRE-ARMS.



CHAPTER XXXII.

HINTS UPON FIRE-ARMS.

The contemplated change in military and naval weapons.—Brown Bess, the percussion musket, the Minié, the Enfield, and the breech-loader.—The necessity of keeping pace with the times.—On the conversion of Enfield rifles into breech-loaders.—Mr. Westley Richards' and Messrs. Terry and Calisher's systems of breech-loading arms.—Their great advantages over all other systems as soldiers' arms.—On breech-loading arms for sporting purposes.—The opposition of "the old school" to the introduction of breech-loaders.—Thirty reasons for preferring breech-loading guns to ordinary muzzle-loaders.—Ancient prejudices against innovations.—Breech-loading rifles for sporting purposes.—Mr. Westley Richards' system of breech-loading rifles the best yet brought out for sporting purposes.—On different methods of rifling.—The Whitworth compared with the Enfield.—The Lancaster and Henry rifle.—Unscrupulous venders of arms.—Buying cheap guns a mistaken policy.—On the choice of a gun.—First-class guns compared with the inferior article.—The way to test the powers of a gun.—Correctness of shooting, penetration, and the distribution of the charge.—Requisites for brilliant shooting.

AT a time when cannon and rifles form the subject of so much discussion in every circle, it were well to give some consideration to the breech-loading

system, as applicable both to military and sporting arms.

In spite of the trammels of red tape and old-fashioned official routine, "the powers that be" have at last become aware of the fact, that in order to maintain our national prestige they must keep pace with the times; and although Government are still very slow in recognising real merit in new inventions, and look upon every contemplated change as an officious innovation, still much has been done to benefit the service, more especially as regards the armament of our land and sea forces.

One of the greatest generals of the past, Sir Charles J. Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, believed in the efficiency of the Brown Bess of his day with its flint-lock and bright barrel; for he had seen many a glorious field won by men armed only with that weapon, and knew no other.

The first great change for the better was the introduction of the percussion musket, which was regarded with such suspicion by the authorities, that, in the first instance, I remember only one company per regiment was entrusted with it. Time passed, and the new arms did good execution in their day, for with them the decisive battles of the Sutlej and the Punjab were won. Thanks, however, to the late Duke of Newcastle, then Secretary of State for War, and the right man in the right place, in spite of the tenaciousness of ancient prejudices,

the *grooved bore* was issued to the line, first the Minié, and subsequently the Enfield; and this country is indebted to that wise minister for the most brilliant victory of modern times, as it was solely by the deadly efficiency of their volleys that a handful of British troops were enabled to hold their own, and repulse overpowering numbers of a brave and determined enemy on the heights of Inkermann.

Ten years have rolled on since that murky morning when the soldiers' battle was won, and another era in our national armament is at hand, for the weapon that did us such good service at Inkermann is about to be discarded, and Government has determined that the whole of our army and navy shall be armed with breech-loaders.

The repeated warnings of the press, to whom be all honour for its wise foresight and unceasing watchfulness over the safety and honour of the country, together with the sad issue of the late Danish campaign, has done much to open the eyes of the authorities, and make them aware that even the bravest of troops equipped with antiquated weapons cannot hold the most defensible positions against the attack of an enemy whose arms combine every improvement of the age.

I was present during the latter part of this campaign, and am of opinion that the principal cause why the gallant Danes had to abandon position after position and finally to succumb, was not so

much on account of overpowering numbers of the invaders, but chiefly because of the great superiority of the German breech-loading needle-rifle over the inferior muskets with which the sturdy defenders of the soil were armed, and the great advantage the allied armies had in modern artillery of long range and heavy calibre.

English sympathy was entirely with the little kingdom striving to hold its own against a confederacy of nations; and although "the force of circumstances" (*i.e.*, mistrustfulness of France) prevented our throwing the sword into the scale (which many brave hearts wished to see done), it is to be hoped that the ultimate result of this unfortunate war will serve as a warning to future ministers, and prevent any false economy, old prejudices, red-tape, or procrastinating official routine interfering with the effective maintenance of our national defences, and the efficient equipment of our land and sea forces, according to the march of the age, and the improvements that science is continually making. If Great Britain is to be maintained as a first-class power, she must, as in days of yore, ever be prepared against an emergency. Her supremacy was won by force of arms; and by force of arms it must be kept. The time has not come for the sword to be turned into a ploughshare, and as we wish for peace, we should be prepared for war.

Diplomacy, although useful in its way, should not be our sole dependence when the honour, safety, and

liberty of action of the country are concerned. As a nation we are not famous in that line—it never was our *forte*. We have often lost by treaties the advantages gained by the sacrifice of our best blood; for, whenever a question has arisen, our diplomatists have found their match; and the nation has had to fall back upon that which has never failed her—the staunch hearts and bull-dog courage of her stalwart sons.

A committee is now sitting to determine the best and most efficient breech-loader for military and naval purposes, and rewards have been offered as inducements for practical gunmakers to find out some plan of converting the present Enfield into a breech-loader.

Amongst the many systems sent in, that of Mr. Mont Storm, an American, is the simplest and the best; but the converted Enfield breech-loader is not an efficient and serviceable weapon for the soldier, being but an hermaphrodite production, which will scarcely repay the outlay of the conversion.

Many inventions have been brought before Government and tested by the authorities, in order to decide upon the best weapon for the soldier; but the only systems that have answered the numerous requirements for a military arm are those of Mr. Westley Richards and Messrs. Calisher and Terry, both eminent Birmingham gunmakers and contractors to the Board of Ordnance.

Breech-loading carbines on both principles have been supplied to different cavalry regiments, and each system seems to have given great satisfaction. They have proved incomparably superior to any hitherto issued, and have doubled the efficiency of our mounted troops.

They are extremely simple and uncomplicated in construction, do not easily get out of order, and, in case of accident, can be readily repaired by a regimental armourer. They can be loaded with great rapidity, with the impossibility of any accident occurring, do not foul after heavy firing, are of greater penetration than the Enfield rifle, and at long ranges great accuracy of shooting can be obtained.

They are preferable to all other systems I have yet seen, for the following reasons, which, to a military man, are obvious at a glance; viz., the barrel, being a fixture, is not liable to be deranged by rough usage, such as the jolting of a horse or the charge of a bayonet. They can be easily reloaded by the horseman without interfering with the management of his charger; whereas, with the old muzzle-loading carbine, the trooper was at his horse's mercy whilst he attempted to draw his ramrod and drive home an obstinate ball, which was almost an impossibility after a few discharges, on account of the accumulated foulness. Furthermore, the infantry soldier can always reload with the point of his bayonet and the muzzle directed towards the enemy,

which is often a great advantage ; for instance, when a square is vigorously attacked by cavalry, the first and second ranks receive the charge kneeling, and have much difficulty in loading in that position. There are two reasons by which I account for either of these breech-loaders having greater penetration and longer range than the Enfield rifle at present in use in the army : first, because there is no *windage*, as the barrel is bored gradually smaller from the breech end towards the muzzle ; the projectile, having a greater diameter than the bore of the muzzle, takes the rifling from being forced through the grooved barrel by the explosion of the charge ; and secondly, because the ignition, being central, is more instantaneous : the whole of the powder is burnt.

The total absence of foulness was satisfactorily proved by the experiments made by Government, when several hundred rounds were fired from rifles on these systems without cleaning, and there was no more foulness in the barrel, or greater recoil experienced, in the last shot than the second. This is easily accounted for, as the greased wad which lubricates the barrel at every discharge is of two sizes larger than the diameter of the barrel at the muzzle ; consequently, whatever remains of the exploded powder or paper from the cartridge of the last shot is driven out of the barrel by the succeeding one.

The illustrations show the breech-loading carbine constructed by the firm of Calisher and Terry, for the use of H.M. Cavalry; when charged ready to be



cocked ; and also a longitudinal section of the same, with the chamber open to receive the charge. For the purpose of illustration, a cartridge and ball are placed in the position they take previously to being fired. The carbine, the length of barrel of which is 26 inches, weighs 6lbs. 2oz., and is of 40-bore. The nipple has the peculiarity of being shaped like an inverted cone, the opening next to the percussion powder in the cap being as large as possible consistent with safety, and gradually becoming smaller, as by this means greater explosive power is obtained to burst the cartridge, and ignite the charge. A ramrod divided into two parts, one fitting parallel to the barrel, and the other in the stock, serves to wipe out the barrels or push back the charge, should it require to be withdrawn. Of course, it is never required in loading. The cartridge which (should occasion require it) could easily be made up by the soldier himself, is of strong brown paper, fastened by some adhesive substance to the end of a cylindro-conical projectile, having a slightly concave base. The charge, two drachms, is held in its place by a wad well saturated with tallow or grease, which is glued to the back, and prevents the gun from fouling.

The Times, speaking of its great advantages over the old system, says :—" A powerful and most effective weapon, known as Calisher and Terry's Patent Breech-loading Rifle, is, by the order of the Secretary of State for War, to be supplied immediately to

several cavalry regiments.* The peculiar advantage of this weapon is to make one man equal to ten ; the carbine may be loaded with facility at the time of a horse being at full gallop, because neither biting the cartridge nor a ramrod is required, and there is no risk of blowing off the hand while loading. The Small Arms Committee have submitted the carbine to the severest tests, making a most favourable report on its peculiar advantages, and hence its adoption in the army. Only some few months ago, Calisher and Terry's rifle was subjected to a test by Captain Richard Hewlett, of the *Excellent* gunnery ship, and 1800 rounds were fired without the carbine requiring to be cleaned, or missing fire ;† the same carbine was tested on Southsea-common by order of the Lieu-

* This rifle has been issued to H.M.'s 18th Hussars and the Cape Mounted Rifles, and Lieut.-Colonel Knox, commanding the former regiment, thus expresses his approval of its efficiency :—"Brighton, 24th May, 1862.—Dear Sir,—In reply to your inquiries about the Terry carbine lately supplied to the regiment under my command, I have much pleasure in stating that I consider, as a cavalry carbine, it cannot be surpassed. It has now been in use in the regiment for nine months. When I first got it I was apprehensive that the mode of loading would prove difficult to a dragoon when mounted, but I found the men very soon got into the way of it, and now load when mounted with the greatest ease and rapidity. As regards safety, I have no hesitation in saying it cannot be excelled. I did hear that the carbine was difficult to load with the Government ball ammunition, and, as a proof to the contrary, I mention that a few days since I had a troop out at ball-practice, under my own eye, who fired 800 rounds, and in no single instance was there the slightest difficulty experienced in loading by any man ; in fact, so easy was the process, that a child might have performed it.—Yours, &c., RICHARD KNOX, Lieut.-Col., commanding the 18th Hussars."

† "This is to certify that I have seen 1,800 rounds fired from this rifle without cleaning.

"July 20, 1858."

R. H. HEWLETT.

tenant-Governor, Major-General the Hon. Sir James Yorke Scarlett, and 25 rounds were fired at 300 yards' range from the butt; and the General himself made a centre hit. An officer on the ground, one of the instructors of musketry, then took the instrument and struck the target afloat twice out of three times, at a distance of 1050 yards, yet the barrel is but 20 inches in length."

My experience in breech-loading arms for sporting purposes dates back since the year 1855, when my attention was attracted to the La Faucheux system by that excellent shot and practical mechanic, Mr. Lang, of "Old Red House" notoriety, to whom the English sporting world* is indebted for the efficient carrying out of a principle which is almost as great an era in gun-making as the invention of the copper cap. After two years' experience and repeated trials, in which, to my disgust, I found my favourite Manton, and others of my hardest-hitting muzzle-loading guns, equalled or beaten by breech-loaders made by Lang, my scepticism vanished; I felt convinced the system was sound, and that sooner or later a complete revolution must take place in the manufacture of fire-arms.

Under these impressions I endeavoured to concentrate my ideas on paper, for the benefit of my brother

* Although this system was invented and extensively adopted in France several years previous to its introduction in this country, the French workmanship of that day was, generally speaking, so inferior that no sportsman liked to shoot with a French gun. Even French sportsmen preferred English fire-arms.

sportsmen, and my letter appeared in *The Field, the Country Gentleman's Newspaper*, of the 31st October, 1857, in which I enumerated thirty advantages that breech-loaders possess over ordinary muzzle-loading guns. Little did I dream of "the hornets' nest" in which this innovation placed me. I was attacked on all sides, by gun-makers, book-makers, and contumacious, pedantic old sportsmen, who all declared forsooth, "that the Old Shekarry must be demented to think of adopting French fads and foreign gim-cracks;" however, that party (whose motto is *Frangas non flectes*) being somewhat remarkable for pertinacity in his opinions, and inflexibility of purpose,* continued to disseminate his doctrine in spite of the sarcastic insinuations of tribes of gun-sellers, who, doubtless, had large stocks of muzzle-loaders on hand, and did not like to see the value of their stock go down in the market. "The system is not safe; the breech is not sound; the guns will not shoot;" was the cry, and at times the controversy became so warm, that the "interested opponents" became even unparliamentary in their language.

Bets of all descriptions, to any amount, were offered, which, had the Old Shekarry been "an army

* The Old Shekarry, when a very small boy, went with his maternal to have his bumps felt. The phrenologist, a quaint old card, went on with his work in a very matter-of-fact style until he came to a protuberance which seemed to puzzle him; he grunted, felt again, and then speaking to the boy who wrote to his dictation, said: "No. 16. Firmness—immoderately large," (*sotte voce* to the maternal), "amounting, I am afraid, madam, to obstinacy." The old lady, who, up to that time, had entertained doubts as to the truthfulness of phrenology, went home quite a convert.

contractor" instead of a soldier, he would have had to borrow capital to cover. At this crisis General Charitée, a celebrated old sportsman and a crack shot, came to the rescue, challenged all comers in *The Field* and offered to back his breech-loader, made by Lang, for one thousand pounds against any muzzle-loader belonging to the boisterous crew. This plucky offer, although never taken up, hushed the storm, the agitation was calmed, temperate discussion followed, trials were organized, the subject was ventilated, and as a matter of course, the breech-loading system became a recognised institution in the sporting world.

I have now used the breech-loader for nearly ten years, during which time I have shot a great deal in the worst climate for arms of any description (the west coast of Equatorial Africa), and, after giving the system every trial that experience can devise, I have found no reason to alter my opinion as to its excellence and efficiency. The thirty reasons why I prefer the breech-loader to the ordinary muzzle-loader, which I gave in *The Field* newspaper in 1857, are—

1. The extreme facility and quickness in the loading, whereby any person with a breech-loader may load and fire at least six shots in the same time that another with a common gun takes to load and fire two.

2. Whilst shooting with a party in line, what a decided advantage the breech-loader has over the common gun! No halting the line to reload; you

fire, and continue moving on, loading with the greatest ease and celerity as you go. By this means the line is kept unbroken, and in cover the sportsmen are not exposed to the danger of a stray shot from any one lagging behind. What is more calculated to try the patience of a man than this continual stopping? No one likes to keep his friends waiting, and consequently reloads with the greatest expedition. In the hurry of the moment how often does a shot drop in the nipple, or some mistake take place in the loading? to rectify which the line is delayed, and the game, perhaps already afoot, makes off. All this is avoided by the breech-loader.

3. The great comparative safety in using a breech-loader is undeniable. Never by any chance need you have the direction of your gun's muzzle pointed either towards yourself or your friends in loading. It should be kept in the direction you are going.

4. You cannot make any mistake in the loading, such as leaving out or putting in two charges of powder or shot into one barrel.

5. How many accidents have taken place from a sportsman, in the haste or excitement of the moment, loading one barrel with the other on full-cock, which the shock of ramming tight wads, or catching in the trousers or a twig, has caused to go off! There is no chance of this with a breech-loader.

6. How many accidents does one hear of taking place with the common gun, from the pouring powder from a full flask down the muzzle of a gun recently

discharged, in which perhaps a bit of lighted tow, or, what is oftener the case, a bit of cork (got in the powder in taking the cork out of the canister) may remain. There is no chance of losing a hand in this manner with a breech-loader.

7. You are always enabled whilst loading to see clearly through your barrels, and are certain, each shot, that there is no obstruction or dirt got in, which is a great advantage, as many people have been injured by guns bursting from the muzzle being accidentally plugged up with clay, which may have got in whilst jumping a ditch, climbing over a fence, or stumbling on an uneven turnip field.

8. From the formation of the cartridge, your shot cannot loosen or fall out whilst walking with the muzzle downwards.

9. You have no chance of the nipple breaking, or being bothered with its stopping up.

10. How often in a day's shooting, when both barrels are discharged, do you mark a bird down: what an advantage the sportsman armed with a breech-loader has, in being enabled to walk up at once, loading as he goes, without ever taking his eyes from off the spot where the game settled!

11. Among other advantages is the total absence of any flash or escape from the breech. Thus, in firing the second barrel on a damp day, the sight is not obstructed, from smoke hanging before the eyes.

12. There is much less report from a breech-loader

than from an ordinary gun, from the whole discharge taking place internally.

13. There is no chance of some unlucky cap flying and endangering your eyesight.

14. There is very much less recoil than from an ordinary gun,—a great advantage in a long day's shooting; no blackened shoulders, no stiffness the day after. The reason of there being less recoil in a breech-loader than in a muzzle-loader of the same size and weight, is by its construction rendering it necessary to have more weight of metal at the breech; and also because at the hollow of the cartridge of the breech-loader there is a light roll of paper, about one-eighth of an inch in thickness, which (like the buffer of a railway carriage) gives with the action of the powder, and lessens the recoil.

15. Rain or damp, whilst out shooting, cannot affect or injure the charge or caps; neither being exposed to the weather, in the same way the nipple of the ordinary gun is. No chance of miss-fires on that account with a breech-loader.

16. The breech-loader takes very little time cleaning; a piece of tow and an oiled rag run through the barrel is sufficient; and by looking through them, it is very easy to be seen whether they are clean—a great advantage. Whereas, with an ordinary gun, the dirt is forced into the breech or the nipple, and frequent washing out of the barrels is required.

17. The carrying out of a second gun is obviated;

for a gentleman can reload his gun in most cases more quickly than his keeper can hand him another. I have always had an objection to having a keeper walking behind me with a loaded gun. Perhaps it may be a weakness I have got; but I always feel afraid of his tumbling and “making game” of me.

18. The bother of carrying powder-flask, shot-bag, caps, wads, loading-rod, and nipple-screw is avoided; none being required with a breech-loader, the cartridges being carried either in the pocket or in a waist-belt.

19. Breech-loaders hit harder, and consequently carry further, than the ordinary guns,—a bold assertion, but experience has proved it, and my way of accounting for this fact is, that all *windage* is prevented (by the wadding used being a size larger than the bore); besides which, I think they *burn more powder*, of a larger grain than that in general use for percussion-guns, and therefore stronger, because there is more air between the grains that facilitates combustion. I also consider that they shoot *quicker*, because there is no long communication (the nipple) between the point of ignition and the charge, the explosion of the cap taking place in the centre of the powder, which is inflamed *almost* simultaneously; for it is an error to suppose even that gunpowder explodes instantaneously, as, however rapid its progress, it takes a certain time in travelling from the first grain to the last. Again, in the

muzzle-loader, the force of the powder in the nipple and that part of the charge nearest to it, drives the powder in the most distant part of the charge through the barrel unexploded, consequently the force of a part of the powder is lost.

20. Breech-loaders *foul very little*, as the thick elastic mercurial waddings which enter the breach are fully a size larger than the bore of the muzzle; consequently being driven through the barrel by the action of the powder, each discharge carries away any refuse or accumulation that may have been left by the previous one, and at the end of a long day's shooting the barrel is almost as free from foulness as at the beginning; also, the explosion of the charge does not take place in the breech, but in the paper cartridge, which comes out uninjured, containing the *débris* of the burnt powder, which in the ordinary gun is drawn into the chamber and nipple every time it is reloaded, until the latter becomes clogged up, and miss-fires are the consequence.

21. What an advantage it is, when shooting in fens, swamps, or rice fields, to be able to load without being obliged to put the butt of your gun in the mud or water, whereby you wet and soil your clothes when you put it up to the shoulder, making yourself uncomfortable for the day!

22. When shooting in dense cover, or perhaps when perched in the fork of a tree, or in a pit waiting by water, or a salt-lick for deer, bison, or other large game, what an advantage it is being able to re-

load with so very little change of position in a small space!

23. What an advantage to the Indian sportsman who fires and reloads in a howdah, moving and shaking from the motion of the elephant!

24. What an advantage to the elephant-hunter in South Africa, who is obliged to load and fire from his horse's back! having to keep his eye perhaps on an infuriated wounded animal, to look out for obstructions in his path, and to reload his discharged piece.

25. How often in the field does the noise of ramming down a tight wad, whilst re-loading the ordinary gun, put up birds on all sides, who thus get away, to the sportsman's disgust! Not so with the breech-loader. What an advantage being able to load without noise is to the Indian snipe-shooter, who often, after a hard day's blank fag, arrives on small insulated patches of grass alive with snipe, where he may perhaps fire a dozen shots without moving a single pace, and when every slightest movement and noise, caused by re-loading, puts up dozens of birds all round, whom he has the mortification of hearing call, "scape, scape!" as they collect in clouds and soar away. When birds are thick, I fairly believe, all things considered, that a sportsman armed with a breech-loader may easily kill twice as many birds as an equal shot with a common gun.

26. What Indian sportsman, after a heavy day's snipe-shooting under a hot sun, has not found his hands all sore and blistered from constantly ramming down

the charge? Never this with a breech-loader. What an advantage this is to the engineer officer, who has often in India to give up the amusement of snipe-shooting, because it makes his hands unfit to use the pen.

27. Who does not feel that he can shoot better and with greater satisfaction, having his hands clean? whereas with a common gun they will in a few times loading get blackened with exploded powder, and sticky. Now, with a breech-loader, a man may put on a pair of white kid gloves, kill a good bag of game, and return with them scarcely soiled.

28. In cold weather who has not found the loading of a common gun and putting on caps distress him beyond measure, especially if he has been obliged to pull off his warm gloves before he is able to effect it at last? No such bother with a breech-loader.

29. What an advantage it is being able to draw your charge in a moment, and change the number of your shot. How often whilst after snipe do you come across duck; or, in India, whilst after hares and partridges, do you start a herd of deer, a sounder of pig, or perhaps a royal tiger?

30. How pleasant it is being able to substitute ball for shot in a few seconds, instead of the old tedious manner, of drawing your charge with the screw of your ramrod, which takes ten times as long, and makes noise enough to scare away the game!

The sportsman can easily make up his own cartridges at the rate of about half a gross in an hour;

or, if he prefers it, he can purchase them all ready from any gunmaker.

When all the advantages of the breech-loader are contrasted with the known disadvantages of the muzzle-loader, it is difficult to account for the prejudice that has existed against them for so many years; for, notwithstanding that the present system was introduced by La Faucheux a quarter of a century ago, it is only lately that it has come into general use amongst sportsmen. Numerous objections have been urged against the system, but none appear to have had any substantial foundation; and I shall not enter into them, although I am aware that there are many sportsmen of the old school who from prejudice will not even deign to give it a trial: with them arguments and facts are both equally lost.

In the pursuit of large game, breech-loading arms are infinitely preferable; for until the last few years the hunter was always obliged, when waging war with the denizens of the forest, to keep up a battery of several guns and rifles, which, to say nothing of the expense of the first outlay and the continual wear and tear, &c., was attended by several serious disadvantages, some half-dozen of which I shall enumerate.

In the first place, two or three gun-bearers are required to each sportsman, whose duty it is to pass up the spare guns as fast as those in hand are discharged: now, it is a great disadvantage for a hunter,

when on trail or stalking, to have a number of persons at his heels, on account of the extra noise they must necessarily make in forcing their way through cover, which often gives alarm to the game and prevents him from getting a shot.

Secondly, it is a great drawback, whilst in the pursuit of some dangerous animal, when a *faux pas* might be attended with fatal consequences, to have any other than yourself to look after.

Thirdly, it is not pleasant to have loaded fire-arms carried in the rear by inexperienced hands, with whom an accident from carelessness is as likely to occur as not.

Fourthly, it is not a comfortable feeling to have to depend upon the coolness and courage of your followers; and many a sportsman has found himself in an awkward position by his gun-bearers having been seized with a panic, and bolting, leaving him, with both barrels discharged, in the presence of a wounded and infuriated animal, when nothing but some lucky chance can prevent a catastrophe.

Fifthly, it frequently happens, in hunting in different countries, that the sportsman (if he does not keep in his pay a shekar-gang of his own, which is expensive work) has to entrust his spare guns to men of whom he knows nothing, who may be tempted to decamp with them—not a very unfrequent occurrence.*

Sixthly, it is a great annoyance to a tired sports-

* Lieut. Rice, of the Bombay army, lost all his guns in this manner.

man, after a hard day's fag, to have to clean four or five double guns and rifles, which task he dare not entrust his followers to perform, as there are times when a miss-fire might be attended with the most serious consequences.

Happily for the sportsman of the present day, all these disagreeable contingencies may now be avoided by making use of rifles on the breech-loading system. Now, independent of gun-bearers, he can roam through the forest alone, careless as to what animal he may meet, for he knows that, should his first shots not take deadly effect, he can reload in the twinkling of an eye, and keep up a running fire, against which nothing can stand, instead of having to bolt under cover to reload (in case a spare gun is not at hand), returning breathless, and often with unsteady hand, from having to use sheer force in jamming an obstinate ball down a foul barrel. When mounted, a rifle on the breech-loading system has immense advantages, as it can be easily reloaded, without in any way interfering with the management of the horse; whereas with the old muzzle-loader the sportsman was entirely powerless whilst drawing his ramrod and ramming home the bullet. He who has once used a breech-loading gun or rifle will no more think of going back to a muzzle-loader, than the crack marksman at Hythe would return to old "Brown Bess."

Lang's breech-loading rifles have either three or four broad grooves (I prefer the latter); and the

projectile used is of a cylindro-conical shape, very similar to that used by General Jacobs, of the Scinde Horse. With one of his double rifles, forty bore, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. in weight, a bull's-eye three inches in diameter has been struck thirteen times in eighteen shots, at a hundred yards, firing right and left barrels alternately, and the other shots were all within four inches from the centre. At three hundred yards, bullet after bullet was put in the area of a foot square, which is almost as close shooting as can be got out of a double rifle. For great precision at long distances, single ones must be used; as in every double rifle, where one sight has to serve, the barrels must *converge*, consequently the lines of trajectory must *cross* at some point, and although up to three hundred yards the lateral deflection may not be very material, they can never exhibit the precision of single barrels at long distances.

Since Mr. Lang's first improvement on the La Faucheux breech-loader, numberless modifications of the system have been adopted by different gun-makers.

Purday, Lancaster, Boss, Whitton and Daw, Dougal, Cogswell, and a host of others, have each invented some change (some for the better, and some for the worse,) but Mr. Westley Richards has brought out the most perfect system of breech-loading guns and rifles (for sporting purposes) that I have yet seen. It surpasses all others, being simple in construction, not liable to get out of order, and ex-

tremely handy to load, the lever [an indescribable nuisance in all other systems] being dispensed with. The form of the gun is exactly like that of an ordinary muzzle-loader, with front action, locks, and fore-part all of wood. The mechanical arrangement is of a most safe and simple character. A self-acting spring latch secures the breech-end of the barrels, fitting into the solid iron, after loading. This self-acting latch is pulled back by a simple action of the thumb, in releasing the barrels, and the loading is effected with the greatest ease.

Arms are still in a transition state, and it is yet a matter of doubt as to which system of rifling is the best. From the numerous experiments I have made and witnessed, I consider that, for *accuracy of fire*, nothing equals that of Mr. Joseph Whitworth, of Manchester, his rifle with the *hexagonal bore* and elongated projectile having "distanced" every other at long ranges in the course of experimental trials lately made at the School of Musketry at Hythe; besides which *the trajectory is lower than any other system*. He uses a short barrel, having an hexagonal bore and a very quick turn; for whereas the Enfield rifle has only one turn in 6 ft 6 in., and therefore only half a turn in the barrel of the Enfield, which is 3 ft. 3 in., he has a 45-inch bore, with one turn in 20 inches, which rotation is sufficient with a bullet of the requisite specific gravity. Mr. Whitworth has reached such a pitch of accuracy, that in a shed excluded from the influence of wind, and firing from

a beautifully-contrived rest, at 500 yards he can put any number of consecutive balls within a space less than that occupied by a five-shilling piece ; and it is said that he will not be contented until he can throw a bullet from the barrel of one rifle into the barrel of another placed at 500 yards distance. His ordinary rifles are guaranteed, in the hands of a good marksman, to be true at the same distance within eight inches. When his rifle was tested at Hythe with a Regulation Enfield, the efficiency of the one as compared with the other was as twenty to one : Colonel Wilford saying that the Whitworth was better at 800 yards than the Enfield at 500. Beyond 1100 yards the Enfield must cease firing even at large masses, while Whitworth's can do business at 2000. Indeed, rifling seems in its infancy, and range must only cease with the power of the human eye to take an aim. If Mr. Whitworth applies his peculiar principle of rifling to a breech-loader he will produce the most finished weapon of the day.

Mr. Lancaster's elliptical rifling gives excellent practice, and *the bore being smooth*, is not liable to harbour rust or wear away, and is easily cleaned.

Mr. Henry, of Edinburgh, has lately turned out most excellent arms of octagonal bore, the shooting of which can scarcely be surpassed, and the success they have won at the Wimbledon meeting has gained him a great name for careful workmanship.

I shall conclude my remarks by observing that the market in the present day is deluged with arms that

are made *to sell*, and not to shoot; and the public should be on their guard, so as not to allow themselves to be taken in by spurious imitations; for there are unscrupulous *vendors* who do not hesitate to engrave the names of first-class gunmakers upon guns of inferior workmanship, and sell them to the uninitiated as "bargains." Young sportsmen, in selecting a gun, should always go to a maker of note, who, for the sake of his own credit and reputation, would not allow an arm that is unsound, or of inferior workmanship, to leave his establishment bearing his name, which, in *first-class* work, *is always engraved in full, with address*. He may have to pay a long figure in comparison with the cost of the inferior article, and, perhaps something for "the name;" but he is sure of a good weapon, which will prove far better worth the money in the long run, and need not be apprehensive of accidents from defective workmanship or unsound material. Inferior guns, "made to sell," are now-a-days got up so well, that at first sight they resemble A 1 guns of best material and first-class workmanship; but the practical sportsman, on taking them in hand, soon discovers the counterfeit. There is no "*music*" in the locks; the strength of the mainsprings, as well as the *pull* of the triggers, is unequal; the barrels are imperfectly bored, or rough and unpolished in the interior, and perhaps the gauge shows that they are not of exactly the same calibre. Again, the lock-plate and mountings are not fitted and let in with that peculiar nicety that distinguishes

first-class London work ; and the stock, in spite of a thick coat of French polish and varnish, betrays "*greenness*," being made of unseasoned wood. I have seen some of these inferior guns throw shot pretty fairly to begin with, but after a short time, they invariably fall off both in strength and regularity of shooting, become shaky, and even dangerous ; for the locks (being made of soft metal instead of the best tempered steel) begin to wear, and are no longer to be depended upon.

It is mistaken policy and false economy, to purchase any other than a first-class gun, which, with ordinary care, will last longer than half a dozen cheap ones of inferior workmanship, and give infinitely more satisfaction, to say nothing of the great additional security against accidents.

The following precautionary suggestions relative to the choice and purchase of a gun, and the best mode of trying its powers, may be of service to the tyro.

If price be no object, the novice cannot do wrong by going to any one of the half-dozen crack gun-makers, Purday, Westley Richards, Lancaster, Lang, or Boss, who will not compromise their world-wide reputations by letting a bad gun bearing their name leave their shops. By naming these firms as first-rate artists in gun-making, I by no means mean to infer that other manufacturers are not practically as good, or as much to be depended upon, as I know country makers who turn out as highly finished work as can be purchased in London. My object is to

disprove a doctrine often promulgated by the ignorant, or interested parties attempting to impose upon the credulity of the public, by the unsound doctrine, "that cheaply made guns are intrinsically as good, shoot as well, and last as long as the highly-finished arms that command a high price." It is an egregious mistake. Cheaply got-up and roughly finished guns will invariably disappoint the purchaser, even if no worse result arises ; and well-made, highly-finished guns always prove the cheapest in the end.

If money is an object, and the purchaser does not care to go to a long price, rather than allow himself to be deluded into buying an inferior article, let him go to one of the large London gun repositories such as Whistler's, in the Strand, where he can have the choice of several hundred second-hand guns and rifles by the best makers. Here any one who is a judge of fire-arms can pick out as good and serviceable a gun as can be turned out, at about one-half its original cost.

Although sportsmen rarely care to part with really good arms, some people are whimsical, and like to change their guns as they do their coats ; the consequence of which fancy is, that highly-finished guns that have hardly seen service are often in the market.

A first-rate gun, made of the best materials, with all its component parts well fitted and finished, will last an ordinarily careful sportsman his lifetime. As a proof of this fact I may mention that I bought a 14-bore double gun, made by Westley Richards, from

his agent, the Bishop of Bond Street, in 1843, with which I have shot so much that two pair of barrels were completely worn out, yet the locks and stock are as good as when first turned out of hand. I have also a Manton and a pair of Moore's that are known to be over thirty years old, yet are as serviceable as ever.

Old and well-seasoned walnut (the best wood for gun-stocks), never shrinks or gives way, the locks and barrels fitting as closely and well after twenty years' wear as they did in the first instance.

Brazier's locks (which have been celebrated since the days of Manton), are so admirably made, the springs so carefully adjusted, and the steel so thoroughly tempered, that the friction after many years' use is scarcely productive of any appreciable or perceptible wear ; so that they will generally survive two pairs of barrels, for barrels even of the best quality will give way, and wear thin after much continuous shooting.

Let us suppose, the purchaser having selected half a dozen guns that appear to suit him as regards price, finish, length and bend of stock, bore, weight, &c., proceeds to Hornsey Wood House, or some other shooting ground, to test their capabilities of shooting, a proceeding I should always recommend (and which no respectable gunmaker will object to), before the purchase is concluded.

When ordering a new gun or rifle, I generally try the shooting whilst the gun is in the grey, before it

is engraved and finished, or the barrels browned, as when in this state the shooting can be altered with much less expense than when finished.

Nothing can be easier than to test the powers of a gun, which is the affair of a few minutes. Three things have to be considered, viz., the correctness of shooting, the penetration, and the regular distribution of the charge.

The correctness of shooting is easily ascertained by firing at a small mark on the bull's eye of a target, and observing whether the barrels are so put together as to deliver the body of the charge fairly upon the point aimed at. If barrels are carelessly bored they often throw to the right, or the left, high or low.

Guns also vary in throwing the charge, as more or less elevation is given to the muzzle of the barrels. In my opinion the elevated rib ought to be so regulated as to make the point-blank range forty or forty-five yards, as the generality of sportsmen oftener shoot under than over their game.

The best mode of testing the penetration of a gun is by firing at fifty sheets of brown paper, folded closely together, and fastened tightly on an iron target. A hard hitting gun will drive No. 5 shot through forty sheets of ordinary brown cartridge paper at forty yards, thirty sheets at fifty yards, and twenty sheets at sixty yards. I have broken ordinary beer bottles at the latter distance with a favourite Joe Manton, but it was a gun among a thousand.

Having tested the penetration, the next thing is to ascertain if the gun distributes the charge regularly, and this a few shots at a large white-washed iron target will soon determine. The shots ought to strike very close and regular in the middle, gradually spreading as they diverge from the centre.

When no paper is at hand, some idea may be formed as to the penetrating powers of the gun by observing the state of the shot that has recoiled from the target. It is flattened in proportion to the force with which the gun shoots.

The elevation and regularity of the distribution of the charge is also shown by firing at water on a still day, when the surface is smooth and unruffled.

It is not sufficient that a gun is well finished and hard hitting, it must suit the sportsman in the length and bend of the stock, so that *it comes up at once well* to the shoulder, and strikes the object aimed at with the first motion. This enables the hand and eye to act simultaneously, the great desideratum necessary for good and quick shooting. No one can shoot brilliantly with a gun that does not come up well. A gun should be built according to the length of arm and neck of the sportsman; for, in many cases men can no more use the same gun than they can wear each other's coats.

A well-finished good gun gives confidence to the sportsman, whereas an inferior one destroys it, besides being productive of bad shooting. There is no reason why any one should not shoot well who

has tolerable eyesight, and begins early in life, but there are certain requisites a gun must have, or the best performer will make but a sorry bag. Let the sportsman exercise his best judgment in choosing his gun, and remember that the purchase of an inferior article is not only false economy, but great imprudence, if he sets any value on his personal safety.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

PRACTICAL HINTS ON THE USE OF THE RIFLE.

The theory of rifle-practice.—The rifle—the bullet—the line of fire—the trajectory—point blank range.—The line of sight.—Sights.—Aiming-drill.—Position-drill.—Two steady positions for long-range practice.—Blank-cartridge firing.—Judging-distance drill.—Target practice.—Hints upon loading—allowances to be made for the wind—the state of the atmosphere—and the position of the sun.—Rules to be observed when firing at moving objects.—The best colour for a sportsman's dress.—A table showing the different visibility of colour.

PERHAPS the following hints on rifle-shooting may prove useful to those who have not had the benefit of an efficient instructor.

Riflemen are not made in a day, but it is an established fact that any one gifted with perfect vision can, with *instruction* and *practice*, become an efficient marksman; therefore, none should be discouraged or despair, as perseverance must lead to ultimate success.

Commencing with the *theory* of rifle practice, which must be fully understood before the rifleman can hope to be an expert shot at all ranges, I shall afterwards enter upon the *practical* part of his initiation.

The first point for consideration is the barrel of the rifle, which (in the Enfield pattern), it may be

observed, has three spiral grooves cut in the interior, or *bore*, at an equal distance from each other, of even depth, and making half a turn in the length of the barrel, which is three feet three inches. These grooves, otherwise termed the *rifling*, give the bullet (an elongated cylindro-conical projectile) a spiral motion, sometimes called the *spin* or *twist*, as it flies through the air, point foremost, rotatory on its own axis. This very much increases the accuracy of the flight of the bullet, as it serves to keep it in its true course, and prevents any inclination it may have to deviate from it, owing to irregularity in shape or weight.

The diameter of the bore of an Enfield rifle is $\cdot 577$, but that of the bullet is rather less, in order to facilitate the loading. This difference in size—*i. e.*, the difference between the circumference of the bullet and the bore—leaves a space between the bullet and the bore, termed the *windage*, which was the principal cause of the inefficiency of the old “Brown Bess,” for two reasons—the first, because a great part of the explosive force, or gas generated by the ignition of the powder, was lost, as it escaped by the space between the bullet and the side of the bore; and, secondly, because this irregular escape caused the ball to rebound from side to side in the barrel, instead of passing evenly through the bore, and the consequence of this was that it took an erratic impetus throughout its flight.

The Enfield bullet is, however, so constructed as

to do away with these objections. Although the circumference is much less than that of the bore, so as to enter the barrel easily in loading, *all windage is effectually prevented*, as in the base of the projectile is a hollow, into which is fitted a small wooden *cup*, or *plug*, which, by the force of the explosion of the charge, acts like a wedge,* and expands and enlarges the lower part of the bullet, making it fit the barrel tightly, and *take the rifling*, so that in its passage through the barrel it is constrained to turn with the grooves, and thus receives the spinning movement on its longer axis, which not only insures accuracy of flight, but also always keeps its point forward. By the bullet being thus expanded, and so much enlarged as to fit the barrel and grooves tightly, none of the explosive power of the gas engendered by the ignition of the charge is allowed to escape, but the whole propelling force acts upon the projectile. There is also a much better chance of the whole of the powder being burnt.

The barrel is a tube of iron, of which the sides of the interior, or *bore*, are parallel, but those of the exterior converge, it being necessary that the metal of the breech-end should be very much thicker than at the muzzle, towards which it gradually tapers, as it has to stand the force of the explosion of the charge. In consequence of this contraction, every

* This theory, although adopted by the School of Musketry at Hythe, is contradicted by several competent authorities; and I believe there is reason to doubt its accuracy. *Vide* Major John Boucher's excellent work for the use of Volunteer Riflemen.

barrel has in itself a certain degree of elevation—but of this more anon.

The *axis* of the barrel is an imaginary line drawn through the centre of the bore, and parallel to the interior sides.

The *line of fire* is the continuation of the axis in a straight line, and marks the direction the bullet would take on leaving the barrel, *propelled by the explosion* of the charge, were it not that it is also acted upon by the *power of gravity*, which attracts it towards the earth, and the *resistance the air offers to its passage*, which is always in direct opposition to its flight.

The *trajectory* is the actual course of the bullet, which always describes a curve—a fact easily accounted for, as, from the moment it leaves the muzzle, the force of the gunpowder drives it forward, and gravity draws it downward, so that by yielding to both forces—*i.e.*, by moving onwards and downwards at the same time—it must travel in a curve diverging more and more below the line of fire, until at last, the propelling power being expended, it falls to the earth. Hence it follows, that if the axis of a barrel is directed upon the bull's-eye of a target, at one hundred yards distance, the bullet will strike about one foot five inches below; the power of gravity having made it deviate from the line of fire, and drawn it towards the earth, one foot and five inches, in a flight of one hundred yards. Therefore, if the barrel were as thick at the muzzle

as it is at the breech, it would be necessary to aim one foot five inches above the mark in order to hit it; but this is not the case, for, as I have before observed, every barrel has in itself a certain degree of elevation, on account of the increased thickness of metal at the breech end. The Enfield rifle-barrel has elevation in itself for about seventy-five yards.

The point-blank range is the extreme point at which the trajectory intersects the line of fire, or the greatest distance to which a rifle will throw a ball in a direct course parallel to the line of sight.

If an Enfield rifle be held with the axis of the barrel parallel to the ground at the height of four feet six inches above it, the first graze when the bullet strikes will be about two hundred paces distant, the ball having dropped four feet and a half in that distance. The point-blank range of an Enfield is about 80 paces; but they vary, as more or less elevation is given to the muzzle of the rifle, or according to the strength of the propelling power.

The *line of sight*, or aim, is an imaginary straight line taken from the pupil of the eye through the centre of the back-sight, along the top of the fore-sight, to the object intended to be hit. The back-sight is so arranged as to give the proper elevation for different distances. The further the object is to be aimed at, the greater the elevation required; and this is given by raising the sliding bar of the back-sight, which is marked with lines up to 900 yards.

Accuracy of shooting is greatly dependent upon

the sights being carefully adjusted, and fitted exactly parallel to the axis of the barrel. If the back-sight is too much inclined to the right, or the front-sight too much to the left, the rifle will shoot to the right of the mark aimed at; in the same manner, if the back-sight is placed too much to the left, or the fore-sight too much to the right, the gun will carry to the left; and the greater the distance the greater, in proportion, will be the deviation. Every rifle, therefore, ought to be carefully sighted and shot before it is placed in a novice's hands, as non-success in practice on account of an ill-sighted weapon, would not be his fault, and might serve to discourage him.

The mechanical routine necessary to be gone through before the tyro can become an efficient marksman consists of *Aiming Drill*, *Position Drill*, *Judging Distance Drill*, and *Practice in Firing*.

AIMING DRILL is necessary to familiarise the uninitiated with the use of the sights, teaching him how to “*align*” his rifle, or “*aim*” correctly at a mark. The practice of this drill exercises the eye, strengthening and developing the sight in the same manner that continued exertion increases the power of the limbs. The following standard rules should be carefully observed :—

I.—*The rifle should always be held with the sights perfectly upright*, as it is only in this position that the *line of sight*, the *line of fire*, and *trajectory*, are in the same vertical plane. If the butt of the rifle is not held *vertically*, but is “*canted*” either to the right or the

left, so that *the perpendicular of the back-sight with the axis* of the barrel is not preserved, the ball will strike to the right if the sight inclines to the left, and *vice versa*; and, in firing at long ranges, a very slight deviation in this respect will cause a wide deflection.

II.—The “*aim*” or “*line of sight*” should be taken along the centre of the notch of the back-sight and the top of the fore-sight, which should cover the centre of the object aimed at.

III.—The eye should be fixed *steadfastly* on the mark aimed at, and not on the barrel or fore-sight, which latter will be easily brought into the alignment if the eye is fixed as directed.

IV.—In aiming, the left eye should be closed. Aiming drill is generally taught with a “traversing-rest,” or, if that is not at hand, a tripod with a sand-bag on the top, standing about four feet eight inches from the ground (or the average height of a man’s shoulder) will answer every purpose; and the novice is required to align his rifle with the proper elevation upon objects at distances varying from 50 to 900 yards. Each time he has aligned his rifle he steps aside, in order that the instructor may take his place and see if the aim be correct. This practice should be continued until the novice has no difficulty in aligning his rifle on the bull’s-eye at all distances. Up to 300 yards, the bull’s-eye is eight inches in diameter, and above that distance two feet.

POSITION DRILL is absolutely necessary to ensure good practice at long ranges. It *habituates* the novice

to correct positions, and enables him to fire steadily in all situations. It gives him a perfect command over his weapon, and enables the eye and hand to act together, so that the left hand raises the rifle at once to bear upon the object, for the eye to take aim ; and at the same moment the fore-finger of the right hand acts upon the trigger.

To establish the natural connection between the eye and the hand, constant practice is required ; and the novice should be accustomed to handle his rifle *both with and without the bayonet*, being put through all the motions of firing *standing and kneeling*, with the same precision as if actually practising with ball-cartridge.

At the School of Musketry at Hythe, recruits are taught to fire *standing* at all distances up to 300 yards, and *kneeling* at every longer range.

There are *two* positions for taking a steady aim without artificial appliance :—

The first is by kneeling on the right knee and sitting on the right heel, the rifle being firmly grasped and steadied by the left hand, the left elbow resting on the left knee so as to form a support.

The second is by sitting on the ground with both feet fairly planted flat, and the knees raised so as almost to form a right-angle. The left elbow rests on the left knee, which is pointed in the direction of the object aimed at, and the right elbow rests on the right knee, which is extended to the right.

The latter, in my opinion, is *the firmest* position the marksman can adopt in shooting at long ranges, and

after a little practice it becomes a very comfortable one.

Should the novice meet with any difficulty in aiming correctly, the inspector should cause him to snap caps at a lighted candle placed about a yard distant when if the aim is properly directed, the candle will be extinguished. The novice should be attentively watched during this practice until all tendency to wink or flinch is overcome, and his countenance shows that he has become indifferent to the report.

This practice is *most excellent* for forming "*marksmen*," for, besides saving ammunition, it may be continually resorted to, even in a room, the bull's-eye being a small black wafer on the wall at one end and the stand taken at the other. By snapping caps only the young beginner is enabled to see whether the muzzle of the barrel wavers when he presses the trigger, which he cannot properly ascertain when firing ball, on account of the smoke of the discharge. The constant handling of the rifle in a proper manner, by aiming at various objects at different distances, enables "the finger to work in unison with the eye," and gives great steadiness of position before, during, and after pressing the trigger, which is all that is required in making good ball-practice at a target of which the distance is known.

BLANK-CARTRIDGE FIRING.—Before the novice is allowed to fire with ball, he should practise a certain routine of blank-cartridge firing, in order to further the same object for which he was exercised in snap-

ping caps, as well as to the "*recoil*" or "kick," which is a backward motion caused by the force of the explosion of the powder acting against the breech of the barrel at the same time as against the bullet. The *force of the recoil* depends upon the *charge* of powder, the weight of the bullet, the weight of the rifle, the windage, the rifling of the barrel, the boring of the barrel (whether purely cylindrical or otherwise), the friction, and the foulness, which much increases the resistance offered by the air to the bullet passing up the barrel. The instructor should impress upon the novice the necessity of pressing the heel of the butt well and firmly into the hollow of the shoulder, as the more confidently a man "stands up" to his rifle, the less likelihood there is of random shooting.

The position of the body, arms, and hands, and the manner of pressing the trigger, as also the position of the head when taking aim, are to be duly watched both in this and the former exercise, in order to discover and correct those errors which are fatal to good shooting, and which cannot be so successfully corrected when firing ball.

JUDGING DISTANCE DRILL.—One of the greatest essentials in a well-trained marksman is the capability to estimate distances correctly, as good shooting cannot be made unless the distance is previously ascertained and the proper elevation given to the back-sight. At long ranges it requires great practice to judge distance accurately; but there is always a

ready method of ascertaining it practically, by firing, and watching whether the bullet strikes the ground over or under the object aimed at. If over, he will lower the sliding bar of the back-sight ; if under, he will raise it. Practice over all kinds of ground is the best means of teaching a novice how to judge distance correctly by the eye, and any one possessing good vision may train himself most effectually in this art for all practical purposes. This, however, can only be accomplished by continual practice and careful observation. When engaged in ball-practice at a target placed at known distances, the tyro should carefully notice the *apparent* height of the markers at each range, remembering that in fine clear weather objects standing in a strong light will appear much nearer than they really are, and *vice versâ* in cloudy and damp weather.

At 50 yards, the features of a man may be clearly identified, and his complexion, arms, accoutrements, and dress distinctly perceived, the buttons and the badge on his forage-cap being distinguishable. At 100 yards, the features become indistinct, the buttons appear in a line, and the badge can be only faintly discerned. At 200 yards, the face appears like a whitish ball under the line of the cap, and the buttons and badge become invisible. These distances should constitute the first practice ; the second would embrace distances from 200 to 400 yards ; and the third, from 400 to 1000 yards or more. At 500 yards no features are visible, and the head looks

like a ball upon the shoulders, the neck being hardly visible.

The instructor will desire the novice to mark the size of the men at each distance, and point out any difference he may discern in their appearance. He will also desire him to take notice of the position of the sun, the character of the background, and the state of the atmosphere at the time, in order that he may be accustomed to their altered appearance under different circumstances.

After some days' exercise in Judging Distance Drill, the proficiency of the novice may be tested by his being practised to judge the distance of objects placed at unknown ranges.

TARGET PRACTICE. — The novice having been thoroughly instructed in "*aiming*," "*position*," and "*judging distance*" drill, can commence "*target practice*," when his efficiency will be tested.

The following hints may prove useful to the novice :—

At the moment of *pressing* the trigger, the act of respiration should be suspended, to ensure greater steadiness of aim.

When once the aim is clearly taken, all delay in pressing the trigger is prejudicial to good shooting; as, if the rifle is held at the "present" too long, a "*wavering*" of the muzzle takes place, and an uncertain shot is the consequence.

In taking aim at a target, fix the eye steadfastly on the bull's-eye, grasping the rifle *firmly with the*

left hand “well forward” (according to its balance), the butt being *pressed home* into the hollow of the shoulder; the right hand, with the exception of the forefinger, *lightly* clasping the small of the stock behind the trigger-guard, so as to steady and preserve the butt in a vertical position; then, holding the breath, place the forefinger well round the trigger, feeling it lightly, and raise the muzzle gradually and steadily until the fore-sight is seen through the centre of the notch of the back-sight covering the centre of the bull’s-eye, when the motion should be arrested, and the trigger simultaneously pressed without the slightest jerk, the eye being rigidly fixed on the object aimed at, and the whole of the body *immobile*.

The great “knack” in rifle-practice is to accustom *the hand and eye to work together*, so that the trigger be pressed simultaneously with the object being “covered,” as it is almost an impossibility to retain an aim.

Care should be taken that the aim is not lost in pressing the trigger, which, if the lock is well made, should not “pull too strongly.”

After the trigger is pressed—keeping the rifle to the shoulder—a perfect immobility of body should be retained, and the eye kept steadfastly upon the object aimed at, and the deflection noted.

In aligning a rifle at a mark, the position of the head with reference to the butt will vary according to the range and the elevation required. At short

distances, the shoulder is a little raised and the head bent forward (not sideways), the cheek resting against the small part of the butt, so that the object aimed at is seen through the notch in the back-sight. At longer ranges, the head must be raised, and the shoulder lowered; and at the furthest distances, if the stock of the rifle is too much bent, the heel of the butt may rest against the breast or side instead of the shoulder. As heavy firing in this position is inconvenient, it is perhaps better in this case to allow for the necessary elevation by *firing high*, or aiming above the object intended to be hit, as the recoil is often felt severely when the heel of the butt only rests against the shoulder.

Careless loading is conducive to irregular firing. The exact charge of powder that the rifle will burn should be correctly ascertained and strictly adhered to, for a little more or a little less will cause a great vertical deviation in the flight of the bullet. Care should be taken to keep the barrel upright when pouring in the charge, so that the grains of powder may not adhere to the sides of the barrel, which would foul and impede the passage of the bullet.

The bullet should not fit too *loosely*, nor yet be so large as to require hammering, in order to force it down, as in the former case it is liable "to strip" (or pass out of the barrel without taking the rifling, and gaining the spiral motion), and in the latter it will have ragged edges, which will cause it to diverge from its true direction in its flight through the air.

In *pressing* down the bullet, although great care should be taken to drive it properly *home*, much force should not be employed, as by *ramming* and *jamming* with the ramrod the shape of the bullet is altered and spoiled, which much affects its true flight, and the powder is “mealed” and “caked,” by which the strength of the charge is much diminished, as a certain amount of air is necessary to ensure thorough combustion.

The base of the bullet should rest evenly upon the powder, and its axis be in line with that of the barrel.

For fine shooting, care should be taken that there is no hidden defect in the bullet, for if any part be hollow or imperfect, the centre of gravity will not be in the line of the axis, and consequently there will be a deviation in its flight.

I shall now notice the causes of irregular firing over which the rifleman can have no control, but which may, to a certain extent, be rendered less injurious to “the score” if the following observations are carefully attended to :—

First, *the wind* affects the flight of the bullet to a considerable extent in firing at long distances, diverting it from its true course, and accelerating or retarding its progress according as it blows *with* or *against* it. When the wind blows from a quarter exactly *opposite* to the direction of the bullet, it experiences a greater resistance in its flight, and accordingly more *elevation* should be given. Should the wind blow exactly from the shooter to the target

the resistance will be *less* than ordinary, and consequently *less* elevation than ordinary is required. Allowances should be made according to the strength of the current of air. If the wind blows from the *right*, aim to the *right*, as the deflection will be to the *left*, and *vice versâ* if from the *left*.

If the course of the wind *forms an angle* to the direction of the bullet, aim must be taken, and allowances made accordingly. Thus, if the wind blows from the *right* and *contrary*, the deviation will be to the *left* and *low*: therefore, in order to strike the bull's-eye, aim should be taken to the *right* and *high*; and to the *left* and *high* if the current of air is *contrary*, and from the left.

If the wind blows from the *right* and *rear*, on aiming direct at the bull's eye, the deflection of the bullet will be to the *left* and *high*: therefore, in such a case, aim should be taken to the *right* and *low*; or to the *left* and *low*, if the current of air comes from the *left* and *rear*.

Correct judgment in making the proper allowances for the effect of various winds upon the flight of the projectile, can only be gained by practice in all kinds of weather, but the above hints may assist the novice.

The *state of the atmosphere* considerably affects the *range* of the bullet. In damp weather, when the atmosphere is dense, its resistance to the flight of the bullet is *increased*, and consequently *greater elevation* should be given. In fine clear weather, on the con-

trary, the resistance is *less*, and the bullet *rises*, therefore *less* elevation is required. Humidity in the atmosphere also affects the range of the bullet in a different manner, as it has a certain influence on ignition of gunpowder, which in damp weather is not so rapid as in fine; therefore, on such days larger charges should be used than in hot summer days.

The *position of the sun* is sometimes liable to influence the correct aim, as if it shines from the *right* it lightens up the *right* side of the front-sight, and the *left* side of the notch of the back-sight, throwing the *left* of the front-sight and the *right* of the back-sight into the shade; therefore, if the firer is not careful in aiming properly, the "line of sight" is liable to pass from the *left* of the centre of the notch of the back-sight and the *right* of the front sight, the effect of which would be that the bullet would strike to the *left*, and *vice versâ* if the sun shines from the *left*. Sun-shades are sometimes used to obviate this difficulty.

It must be obvious to all, that the flight of the bullet occupies a certain time, and in firing at *moving* objects a certain allowance should be made accordingly, and great judgment is required in this point when firing at long ranges. For instance, in deer-stalking, if a deer is running *transversely* either to the right or left, a sportsman aiming directly at the shoulder would most likely either strike the hind-quarter or miss by shooting behind, as, in the time between the *discharge* of his rifle and the *impact* or

striking of the bullet, the quarry would have moved forward a certain distance. The following hints on this point may aid the novice:—

In firing at anything moving, it is advisable to “cover” the object and allow the muzzle to follow it, for some distance before pulling the trigger, in order to ascertain the velocity of the motion and the allowances required to be made.

If the object is directly *approaching* the person firing, the muzzle of the barrel should be gradually *lowered*, the finger feeling the trigger all the time, and aim should be taken *low*.

If the object is *retiring*, the muzzle of the rifle should be raised (more or less, according to the distance and the velocity of motion of the object), and aim taken *high*.

If the object is moving across, either to the *right* or *left*, aim should be taken *well forward*, after having followed the motion with the object well covered for some time.

Should the object be *ascending* a hill, fire *high*; if *descending*, fire low; if diagonally, *in front*.

The best colour for the dress of a sportsman is *grey* or *brown*, being less distinguishable than any other.

The following tables were constructed with great care from a series of experiments I made with targets of different coloured cloth, under various circumstances and at different distances, in order to serve

638 GREY AND BROWN LEAST DISTINGUISHABLE COLOURS.

the newly-raised volunteer corps in the selection of the most suitable colour for their uniform. The figure 1 denotes the most visible, 7 the least so, 0 invisible:—

Colours.	At Three Hundred Yards.								At Six Hundred Yards.							
	Open Country.	Wooded Country.	Rocky Ground.	Sea Shore.	Over Water.	Against Sky.	Against Earthworks.	Against Stone Fortifications.	Open Country.	Wooded Country.	Rocky Ground.	Sea Shore.	Over Water.	Against Sky.	Against Earthworks.	Against Stone Fortifications.
Scarlet	4	3	4	3	2	4	5	4	4	2	5	3	2	4	4	5
Green (Rifle)	3	6	5	4	4	2	4	3	3	7	3	5	4	4	4	3
Blue (Royal)	2	4	4	3	5	3	3	2	2	6	3	4	5	4	3	2
White	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	5	2	1
Grey	7	6	7	7	7	6	6	7	6	7	0	6	6	6	7	6
Brown (dead leaf)	7	7	7	6	6	5	7	6	7	0	0	6	0	6	6	7

Colours.	At Three Hundred Yards distant.											
	On a Clear Day.				On a Cloudy Day.							
	Daybreak.	Sunrise.	Mid-day.	Sunset.	Daybreak.	Sunrise.	Mid-day.	Sunset.	Rain.	Fog.	Bright Moonlight.	Starlight.
Scarlet	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	6	3	3	4	5
Green (Rifle)	3	4	4	3	7	7	3	0	4	4	3	4
Blue (Royal)	2	5	3	2	6	6	3	0	4	4	2	4
White	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1
Grey	7	6	7	5	0	0	5	0	6	6	0	0
Brown (dead leaf)	6	7	6	6	0	0	6	0	6	7	7	7

By these tables it will be seen that grey and brown are colours that are the least distinguishable at a distance, and consequently the most suitable for light troops.

APPENDIX.



DIRECTIONS* FOR COLLECTING AND PRESERVING SPECIMENS OF NATURAL HISTORY IN TROPICAL CLIMATES.

INSECTS.—Insects may be found almost everywhere; look especially for all *Beetles* under stones, under bark of decayed trees, on the inside of ditto, on felled ditto, on trunks of ditto (especially those that have the sap running from them), by beating the boughs into a net or sheet, smoking under and burning inside hollow trees, on long grass or herbage, on flowers, under rubbish (especially on the slopes of mountains, and in marshy places), under sea-weed at the sea-side, and indeed they are to be found almost everywhere in warm climates, especially in open places in woods and on the slopes of hills, and are generally most abundant in a light sandy soil and in and after the rainy seasons: they may be collected either by picking with the hands or by sweeping and brushing with a net, according to the situation: the larger ones may either be put separately into pill or other boxes, or else immersed at once into a bottle of clear spirit, when they almost immediately die; and may either remain in the spirit, and

* The author is indebted to Mr. S. Stevens, the naturalist, for this valuable compilation of practical information.

be sent in this way to England (if possible changing the spirit just before sending), or else the same or following day taken out and soaked for about a quarter of an hour in warm water, and then laid on blotting-paper a few hours to dry: after that, either pin and stick in tight in a well-made box, lined with cork or some soft wood, or else (if in a dry country) lay carefully in rows, in a box, on cotton wool: numbers may be packed this way in layers, between soft paper, and generally reach England in beautiful condition. The small beetles may also be collected and sent in the same way, and, if immersed in spirit, put in a separate bottle from the large ones; or else when captured put into a phial with some blotting-paper, and killed on reaching home, by immersing it in hot or boiling water for a minute or two, or placing it in the heat of the sun for a short time: they can then either be pinned or else packed in soft paper in rows and layers, as the others, and should not be despised on account of their small size, as they are frequently more valuable than the larger ones. Look especially in and near ants' nests in sultry weather, and under bark of trees where ants occur, or under stones, and at the roots of grass, for small beetles.

Butterflies and Moths (Lepidoptera) must be collected with great care, so that the beautiful scales on the wings are not rubbed off or injured, as they then become generally worthless: they may be bred from caterpillars found on various trees and plants (which is an excellent plan, as they are then very perfect), or else caught by the aid of a gauze net: a ring net about a foot and a half in diameter and two feet deep, will do very well, attached to a stick three to six feet long. Woods and wild places are generally the best to find them in: it is necessary to pin them as you take them, which must be done with great care, so that the upper parts of the wings are not rubbed; therefore the collector must be provided with a good large box to stick them in. Some of the

large and big-bodied moths will probably not die unless a little oxalic or nitric acid is applied to them, which may be done by dipping a long pin or needle into it and running it down the body of the insect two or three times, commencing under the mouth: they can then either be pinned tight in boxes or else laid between dry cotton and paper, the same as the beetles; or when collected, instead of being pinned, put into three-cornered pieces of paper with the wings folded up, which is a very good plan when there is no convenience for carrying boxes. Other sorts of insects may be caught and killed the same way, and sent over as before directed, between layers of cotton and paper. No other insects but beetles should be put into spirits; and not these when the colours are beautiful, delicate, and of a chalky texture: the bottle before sending should be *full* of insects, or else filled up with cotton, so that they cannot shake about.

Great care must be taken with all insects that they do not get broken, especially the horns (antennæ) and legs of beetles, and the antennæ and wings of the butterflies and moths, for then their value is greatly diminished.

Beetles should always be pinned through the right elytrum, or wing case, so that the pin may come out between the first and second pair of legs; but all other insects may be pierced vertically through the thorax. Great care must also be taken that the boxes containing the insects be left in a dry situation, and the sooner they are transmitted to England the better, previously applying to the inside of the boxes a small quantity of powdered arsenic or camphor, to prevent the attacks of small insects.

ARACHNIDA.—Spiders, Scorpions, and Acari are best preserved in spirits, as well as the Myriapoda, including the Juli, Scolopendræ, and other individuals of the order; but they may be pierced through the thorax (the intestines being

carefully removed and replaced by cotton), and pinned tight in boxes, as the insects.

CRUSTACEA.—The marine species may be killed by being immersed in cold fresh water, and they should be left in it for several hours, to free them from the adhering salt, which, if not well washed out, renders them liable to attract moisture from the atmosphere and injures the specimens. When well washed, separate the upper shells, and remove as much of the fleshy parts as possible; then carefully dry and pack them. The smaller species may be pierced with pins, like insects, if the consequent bulk of the packages be not an objection. Entire Crustacea may be preserved in strong spirits or brine.

SPONGES AND CORALLINES.—Search the line of sea-weed at high-water mark, and the more the latter are covered with small corals and other parasites the better. Never wash them in fresh water, but dry them as they are found. Never wash or squeeze sponges; the fuller they are of gelatinous or fleshy matter the better. Use unwashed small Fuci as packing, dried, but not to crispness: the boxes should be divided into two or three compartments. Corals should never be washed or bleached, but sent as they come from the sea.

STAR-FISH AND ECHINI.—These may be either dried or bottled in the saline fluid. If large, plunge them for two or three minutes into boiling water before drying; if small, one minute will be enough. Annelides, Actinia, and other fleshy things, may be bottled with a saturated solution of bay salt, with two grains corrosive sublimate to each quart. Always keep up the strength of the saline solution by the addition of salt as needed.

LAND AND FRESH-WATER SHELLS.—Land shells are found

in many places, such as under stones, in clefts of rocks, on the sides of hills and mountains, under decayed wood and trees, on the trunks, roots and leaves of trees and bushes, in decayed vegetable matter, dried leaves and moist, on small plants; in fact, almost every situation produces them except open and cultivated places: where dead specimens are found, living ones cannot be far off. When collected, bring them home and put them in a pail, or some other large vessel, and pour a quantity of cold water over them; then cover up the vessel for two or three hours, which will cause the animals to come out a little (it is necessary to cover them up, or else they will crawl away): when they are a little out, draw off the water, and pour a quantity of boiling water on them, so as to cover them well: let them remain a few minutes to cool a little; then take out the animals with a large pin or needle, as you would a periwinkle: when they are all done, take a soft brush and wash off gently all the dirt and filth from them, and place them in another vessel of fresh water until all are clean; then shake out well the water that is in them, and place them out to dry, with their mouths downwards, but not in the sun: when dry, if they are small, pack them away in small boxes, writing on the cover the locality and situation in which found. Should the shells be rather large, then wrap each shell in a paper by itself, and pack them away in a larger box, with their localities, &c., with care; but never put by a box that is not quite full without adding sufficient cotton or other soft substance to fill it, for such tender subjects should not have play during their transit. In rivers, lakes, ponds, and small streams, will be found many species of shells which—although not handsome—are very interesting; none, therefore, should be left behind, as it may be a cause of regret hereafter. Some of the shells which will be found in the above-mentioned places are of the same form as the land shells; others are like our

fresh-water mussel or cockle: they are mostly found in the mud, sometimes in deep water: dead ones are sure to be found on the banks of lakes and rivers; and if you cannot procure living ones, show the natives the dead specimens, and offer them money to get a quantity of living ones. The rivers and pieces of water abound with shells: be diligent in seeking them, and your labours will be most amply repaid. Having collected the fresh-water shells, place them in a vessel, and pour a large quantity of boiling water on them: they do not require to be first put into cold water, as the land shells do: as soon as the water is a little cool, pour it off, take out the animals as before mentioned, wash the shells, &c., &c.; but as the bivalve or fresh-water mussel will open wide as soon as the animal is out, it must be tied close before being put out to dry; if not the hinge will break, and make the shell valueless. Some of the fresh-water shells that are like the snails have a mouth-piece, or operculum, which must be taken care of: the mouth-pieces should be kept in separate packages, and packed with the species of shell to which they belong, as they are of great service in determining the species. Some of the land shells have also a mouth-piece, which should be packed in the same manner. When the bivalve shells are tied up and dry, wrap each of them in a piece of soft paper, pack them in small boxes, and remember localities, habitats, &c., &c.

MARINE SHELLS.—The best time to collect shells on the sea-shore is at the new and full moon, for then the tides make greatest ebb: the collector should be on the spot two hours before low water, with an assistant to help in turning over the large stones, should there be any, under which will be found many species of Cowries, Buccinums, Tritons, Mitres, Cones, and several species of bivalve shells, also many kinds adhering to the stones, which must be taken off with a knife

in a careful manner: several species bore into the stone itself, which must be broken with hammers to get out the shells, or, if the stone be soft, cut it carefully with a hatchet, on doing which many more species will be found: care must be taken to avoid breaking the shells: be always provided with a light basket and a small box in it, in which to put the smaller and more delicate specimens. The stones when turned over must be well inspected, as many will be found covered with marine matter, which makes them appear like the stone itself: collect all, and do not despise them on account of their unmeaning appearance, for amongst them may be new genera and other very rare shells. Many stones at the very lowest ebb will have most shells on them, therefore the collector must not mind getting a little wet. Amongst other sorts will be found Chitons, which must be taken off in the same manner as the limpet and other adhering univalves: care must be taken, when at home, to separate them from the other shells; put them into a pail of fresh water, and let them remain there from twelve to twenty-four hours, by which time the salt on the fleshy substance that surrounds them will be well soaked out; then cut out the animal, and wash the shells well, inside and out, from all filth, and throw them into another vessel of fresh water, where let them remain till the whole are cleaned; then place them on a narrow strip of board and bind them down tightly, put them in a shady place to dry, and in three or four days they will be fit to pack.

Among the rocks on the sea-shore, in the crevices and on them, will be found many species of Patellas, Chitons, Murices, &c. Make a careful survey of every rock and stone; they will amply repay the trouble. All sheltered coves or little bays are the best places in which to find shells: examine these places in preference to others, particularly those in more exposed situations. The first thing to observe when in a new locality is to go along the sands at high-water mark,

for many good shells are thrown up by the sea, particularly light bivalves; any time of the tide will do. Never miss going after a gale of wind, for then many valuable deep-water shells will be found which are not seen at other times. In sheltered bays and places just at the very lowest water-mark will be found, in the sand and mud, various species of bivalve shells, just beneath the surface, and generally in great abundance: do not neglect to collect all and every species, and in plenty.

In collecting shells, whether terrestrial or aquatic, the collector must always give the preference to live shells,—that is, such as are still inhabited by the living animal,—but if they cannot be obtained, dead shells are better than none, though, for the most part, they are worn and faded. The more delicate species must be packed in cotton or other soft substance, or, in default of such, a fine sawdust. Shells containing their animals, as well as the naked Mollusca, must be preserved in spirits or brine.

DREDGING.—It is necessary to have a rope for the dredge from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 inches (60 fathoms long); a fine sieve, a bucket and a ladle; a boat with a small anchor and cable (not less than 30 fathoms), to moor her in the situation where you are going to dredge; a good stout canoe, to convey the dredge away from the boat as far as the rope will allow. The dredge to lie in the bow of the canoe, mouth upwards, handle inwards: when it is conveyed as far as the rope will allow, those in the canoe are to heave,—that is, turn the dredge over gently into the water, and let it be from five to six minutes, until it is fairly at the bottom; then haul it on board the boat: should any obstruction—such as a rock, &c.—prevent its being brought home, place the canoe under the rope and pull her along until the place of obstruction is arrived at; then bring up the dredge, either straight or by taking it a little

way back, and let those in the boat haul dredge and canoe towards them until clear of the obstacle: the dredge is to be let down again, and hauled in as before. When the dredge is brought alongside the boat, lift it in, and take out all the mud and sand; half fill the sieve with this, and pour a bucket of water gently on it, the party holding the sieve to shake it gently until all the mud and fine sand has passed through: take out all the larger shells as soon as possible, to prevent their breaking the more delicate ones, and put them into your basket, and the smaller ones into boxes. Should there be many small shells in the sieve, which would take much time picking out, it would be best to throw the sand from the sieve into a basket, and take it home, where it can be inspected more minutely, after having dried it in the sun on paper. The nearer the collector gets to a reef of rocks in sheltered places, the better for shells, as they will lie there for protection; but be careful to throw the dredge clear of the rocks, as it will save a deal of trouble.

The dredge can be made 3 feet 6 inches long and 1 foot wide: the outer edge to be turned outwards about the angle of 30° , and beaten down rather fine: the lower part of the bar should not be less than half an inch thick, with holes punched in it from one end to the other, an inch and a half apart, to lash the bag to: the bag can be fashioned according to the dredge, and made of double bread-bags.

MAMMALIA.—The smaller animals of this class may either be skinned or inclosed entire (an incision being previously made in the under side of the animal) in jars or barrels, which are to be filled up with some spirituous liquor, as gin, or, what is preferable when it can be procured, proof spirit diluted with half its bulk of water. If no spirit can be had, strong brine must be adopted. In respect to their retaining their natural colour, brine is even preferable to spirituous

liquors for preserving the specimens. To skin the larger mammalia, make an incision in a straight line along the belly, from the vent to the throat, and detach the skin carefully with the knife. The skull and the bones of the legs and feet are to be left; the brain, eyes and tongue must be extracted, and as little fat as possible be suffered to remain adhering to the inside of the skin, which is then to be dressed with arsenical soap, for the mode of making and applying which see note at end. If, however, some fat remain which cannot well be got rid of, strew it over with powdered tan, or the bark of oak, willow, &c., previously to applying the soap. The ears, lips and feet of large mammalia should, when practicable, be well anointed with spirits of turpentine, which will assist their drying and tend to destroy insects: when dry, roll up the skin with the hair innermost, beginning with the head, and put a layer of dried grass or moss between the folds, to prevent its being injured by rubbing. The skin must be occasionally unrolled and examined, and, if practicable, exposed to a hot sun, and fresh spirits of turpentine added. If any symptoms of insects should appear, tobacco (the stronger the better) strewed in the package will be serviceable; and in countries where spices and aromatic drugs can be procured at a reasonable rate, these may be used to great advantage, and even supersede the necessity of applying the arsenical soap. When a very large animal has been killed, under circumstances which prevent the application of the arsenical soap, the skin should be stretched out on the branches of a tree, to give the air free access to every part of it, and, as soon as it is cold, well dressed on the inside with wood ashes. Entire skeletons (especially of the rarer animals) should be procured when possible. It is not necessary that they should be jointed or set up, but, having removed all the soft parts, boil the bones, and when well dried pack them with moss or grass, or the best packing-stuff

at hand, so that they may travel securely. Take especial care that not a bone, tooth, or claw, be lost.

BIRDS.—With respect to birds, the collector should proportion his shot to their size, so as to injure the skin and feathers as little as possible. As soon as the bird falls, the blood should be carefully wiped up, and cotton placed within the beak to absorb any that might flow from the mouth, and thus prevent its staining the plumage. Birds should be skinned as soon as may be after they are killed, for, if suffered to remain till putrefaction has begun, the feathers fall off. The mode of skinning birds is very similar to that of skinning mammalia, and equal care must be taken both to make the incisions as small as possible and in the least visible parts, and the feathers must be separated so as not to be injured by the knife in dividing the skin: the incision may be made from the vent to the breast: the head and legs must in all cases be carefully preserved, and the os coccygis left in the skin, otherwise the tail-feathers will be liable to drop out. In packing the skins care must be taken that the plumage be not injured by contact with the harder parts, which for that purpose should be surrounded with cotton, tow, or the best soft packing material at hand, as dried leaves or grass. When more than one individual of the same species can be procured, it is desirable that a second specimen should be preserved in spirits, and the same remark applies to the smaller mammalia, and indeed to all the orders. The bird-skins must be dressed with the same materials as those of the mammalia, but the arsenical soap—if used at all—must not be too liberally applied. As the plumage of birds varies extremely at different periods of their life, and even at different seasons of the year, it is of great importance to obtain both sexes, if possible, of all ages, from the chick just hatched to the adult in its maturest plumage, and also in their summer

and winter liveries. Birds' eggs should also be anxiously sought for, and the species carefully identified: the best method of emptying them is to make a single hole near the middle of the shell, of about an eighth of an inch in diameter, into which a small tube is to be inserted, so as nearly to touch the opposite side of the shell, which, being held with the hole downwards, is easily emptied of its contents, by blowing pretty strongly through the tube: if no more convenient instrument be at hand, a straw will make a very serviceable blow-pipe. Birds' nests should not be neglected; they possess a high degree of interest: the collector should therefore take accurate descriptions of the materials, form and size, of every kind of nest he finds, always being extremely cautious to ascertain the species to which each respectively belongs: he should also make careful drawings of every variety, and even collect such of the smaller nests as possess any peculiarity in point of material, structure, or mode of suspension. Burnt alum will be found very useful in cleaning the fingers whilst skinning birds and animals, and also applied to those which have a good deal of fatty matter adhering to them.

REPTILES AND FISH.—These are best preserved in spirits, each specimen being previously wrapped in a linen cloth; but when too large to be so treated, serpents and fish may be carefully skinned, with the least possible injury to the scales or any of the external organs, and with especial caution not to destroy the form of the skin, which may be preserved by stuffing it tightly with cotton or tow, or by filling it with sawdust, and the skins dried, with the head, feet and fins on. Instead of being skinned whole, fish may be divided into two nearly equal portions, by an incision passing longitudinally through the vertex of the head, the back and belly, but on one side of the dorsal, caudal, anal and ventral fins, so as to

leave one-half of the animal with the gills and all the organs of motion perfect. Their flesh may then be easily removed from this portion, and replaced by tow, which will preserve the form of the body. When well dried, this portion is to be carefully packed. On the whole, this method is preferable to all others; and fish thus preserved, when provided with proper artificial eyes and mounted on flat boards, afford excellent specimens. The upper and lower shells of the tortoise tribe should be separated by dividing the ligamentous or bony portion which unites them on each side, between the fore and hind legs; after which the fleshy parts may easily be removed,—the head, legs and integuments of the body being carefully preserved. As to the lizards and crocodiles, they may be skinned in the usual manner, care being taken not to injure the tails of the former, which are very brittle, or, when not too large, they may be preserved in spirits, which is still better.

The form and colour of the eyes in all the vertebrata, of whatever class, should be carefully observed and noted down the moment they are taken.

GENERAL REMARKS.—Every specimen, dry or in spirit, should have a number attached to it, corresponding to one in the collector's note-book, in which he must enter his memoranda concerning it; as for instance,—

The country where found,
The season when,
Habits,
Habitat,
Local name.

The collector should be furnished with knives, scissors, scalpels, pliers, nets, a large assortment of pins of various sizes, needles, a hammer, small hatchet, packing-cases (large

and small, including cork boxes for lepidoptera and other insects, and a great number of pill boxes in nests), cotton and paper, and also with a folding-net, hoop-net, water-net, forceps, digger, glass phials, &c., for collecting insects: he must also have a good supply of prussic acid and arsenical soap. The composition and mode of making the latter is as follows:—

Camphor	-	-	-	-	-	5 oz.
Arsenic, in powder	-	-	-	-	-	2 lbs.
White soap	-	-	-	-	-	2 lbs.
Salts of tartar, or, subcarbonate of potash						12 oz.
Lime, in powder	-	-	-	-	-	4 oz.

Melt the soap completely with heat in a small quantity of water, and add the potash and lime; then remove it from the fire and stir in the arsenic; next add the camphor, previously rubbed to powder, with a little spirit of wine, and mix the whole thoroughly: it should now have the consistence of paste. Preserve it in carefully-closed, glazed vessels, labelled "POISON."

To use it, mix the quantity required with cold water, to the consistence of tolerably clear soup, and apply it with a brush to the inside of the skins.

TO RENDER SHOOTING BOOTS WATERPROOF.—Mix a pint of drying oil, two ounces of yellow wax, two ounces of turpentine, and half an ounce of Burgundy pitch, carefully over a slow fire. Lay the mixture whilst hot on the boots with a sponge or soft brush, and when they are dry lay it on again and again, until the leather becomes quite saturated—that is to say, will hold no more; let them then be put away, and not be worn until they are perfectly dry and elastic; they will afterwards be found not only impenetrable to wet, but soft and pliable, and of much longer duration. *Or*,—Take of

equal quantities of beeswax and mutton suet, and melt them together in an earthen pipkin over a slow fire; lay the mixture while hot on the boots, which ought to be made warm also; let them stand before the fire a short time, for them to soak the preparation in, and then put them away until quite cold; when they are so, rub them dry with a piece of flannel, in order not to grease your blacking-brushes. If you black them well before you put the mixture on you will find them take the blacking much better afterwards.

METHODS FOR OBTAINING THE ODOURS OF PLANTS.

OFTEN during my explorations in regions hitherto untrodden by white men, I have found certain parts of the forest redolent with the most delicious perfume, and I have always regretted that I was ignorant of any means of extracting the aroma from odoriferous plants. Lately, through the kindness of Mr. Septimus Piesse, Ph.D., F.C.S., I have learned to entrap the odour of different kinds of jungle flowers by a simple process; and as this may prove interesting to some of my brother sportsmen, I herewith give the directions obtained from the above-named gentleman.

Perfumes that are derived from plants may be, for the purpose of description, conveniently divided into three classes :—

CLASS I. are the most ancient, and have been in use from the earliest period of which there is record. They consist of the various odoriferous gum-resins, which exude naturally from the trees which yield them; and, to increase the produce, the plants are often purposely wounded. The most important are benzoin, olibanum, myrrh, and camphor. Gum-resins form the chief ingredients in incense, and in pastilles. These odorous bodies are principally consumed in certain religious ceremonies; and, from the early custom of burning incense upon the holy altar, our word perfume, from *per fumus* (by smoke), has been derived. We may include in this class all those parts of plants which are fragrant, such as the long seed-pod of the vanilla plant; the bean of the *Dipterix odorata*, or tonquin bean, which our grandfathers

carried in their snuff-boxes; the root of the *Iris florentina*, or orris root, about twenty-five tons of which are consumed every year by Britannia at her toilet; the rhizome of an Indian grass, known as vitivert or kus-kus; fragrant woods, such as the santal, and the myall, or violet wood of Australia; odoriferous seeds, as caraway and nutmeg: in fact, our first division includes every vegetable substance which has a pleasing fragrance, like some dried flowers. Perfumers grind these several bodies to powder, then mix them in various proportions: the results are, the various sachet powders in such universal use.

CLASS II. are those perfumes which are procured by distillation. This is the first step to separate the odorous principle from the material which contains it. As soon as the Greeks and the Romans learned the use of the still, which was an invention imported by them from Egypt, they quickly adapted it to the separation of the odorous principle from the numerous fragrance-bearing plants which are indigenous to Greece and Italy. An essential oil or otto, thus procured from orange-flowers, bears in commerce to this day the name of Neroly, supposed to be so named after the Emperor Nero; however, long before that time, fragrant waters were in use in Arabia. Odour-bearing plants contain the fragrant principle in minute glands or sacs: these are found sometimes in the rind of the fruit, as the lemon and orange; in others it is in the leaves, as sage, mint, and thyme; in wood, as rosewood and sandal-wood; in the bark, as cassia and cinnamon; in seeds, as caraway and nutmeg. These glands or bags of fragrance may be plainly seen in a thin-cut stratum of orange-peel, from which the otto may be easily pressed out on to paper; so also in a bay-leaf, if it be held up to the sunlight, all the oil-cells may be seen like specks. All these fragrant-bearing substances yield by distillation an otto pecu-

liar to each: thus is procured otto of patchouly from the leaves of the patchouly plant, *Pogostemon patchouly*, a native of Burmah; otto of caraway, from the caraway seed; otto of geranium, from the leaves of the *Geranium rosa*; otto of lemon, from lemon-peel; and a hundred others of more infinite variety.

All the various ottos are very slightly soluble in water, so that in the process of distillation the water which comes over is always fragrant. Thus, elder-water, rose-water, orange-water, dill-water, are, as it were, the residue of the distillation for obtaining the several ottos. We may distil so much of the plant with water as is just sufficient to render the water fragrant, without any otto floating upon it. This is the practice when the water alone is the object of distillation. The process of distillation is very simple; the fragrant part of the plant is put into the still, and covered with water; and when the water is made to boil, the ottos rise along with the steam, are condensed with it in the pipe, and remain floating on the water, from which they are easily separated by decanting. In this way 100 pounds of orange, lemon, or bergamot fruit-peel will yield about 10 ounces of the fragrant otto; 100 pounds of cedar-wood will give about 15 ounces of otto of cedar; 100 pounds of nutmeg will yield 60 to 70 ounces of otto of nutmeg; 100 pounds of geranium-leaves will yield 2 ounces of otto. A simple mode of procuring the ottos from orange, lemon, and bergamot is practised in Italy: the fruit is rasped; the pulp produced is then pressed. The odours of the fruit thus procured are much finer than those obtained by distillation.

Every fragrant substance varies in yield of essential otto. The varieties of ottos are as numerous as fragrant plants; but there is a certain relationship among odours as among tints. The lemon-like odours are the most numerous, such as ver-bena, lemon, bergamot, orange, citron, citronella; then the

almond-like odours, such as heliotrope, vanilla, violet; then spice-odours—cloves, cinnamon, cassia. The whole may be classified into twelve well-defined groups. All these ottos are very soluble in alcohol, in fat, butter, and fixed oils. They also mix with soap, snuff, starch, sugar, chalk, and other bodies, to which they impart their fragrance. And it is thus that we are enabled to transfer the odorous principle from the plant that produces it to an inodorous body, wanting fragrance alone to make it of commercial value. The principal consumption of the various fragrant ottos is for scenting soap. More than 200,000 pounds weight of various ottos were imported into Britain in 1860, and valued at over 180,000*l.*; to this must be added at least one-third as much again distilled in England.

CLASS III. These are the perfumes proper, such as are used for perfuming handkerchiefs. Contrary to the general belief, nearly all the perfumes derived from flowers are not made by distillation, but by the processes of *enfleurage*, or inflowering, and by *maceration* or infusion.

The odours of flowers do not, as a general rule, exist in them as a store or in a gland, but they are developed as an exhalation. While the flower breathes it yields fragrance, but kill the flower, and fragrance ceases. It has not been ascertained when the discovery was made of condensing, as it were, the breath of the flower during life; what we know now is, that if a living flower be placed near to butter, grease, animal fat, or oil, these bodies absorb the odour given off by the blossom, and in turn themselves become fragrant. If we spread fresh unsalted butter upon the inside of two dessert-plates, and then fill one of the plates with gathered fragrant blossoms of clematis, covering them over with the second greased plate, we shall find that after twenty-four hours the grease has become fragrant. The blossoms, though separated

from the parent stem, do not die, for some time, but live and exhale odour; which is absorbed by the fat. To remove the odour from the fat, the fat must be scraped off the plates and put into alcohol; the odour then leaves the grease and enters into the spirit, which thus becomes "scent," and the grease again becomes odourless.

The flower farmers of the Var follow precisely this method on a very large scale, with but a little practical variation, with the following flowers—rose, orange, acacia, violet, jasmine, tube-rose, and jonquil. The process is termed, as said before, *enfleurage* or inflowering. In the valley of the Var, there are acres of jasmine, of tube-rose, of violets, and the other flowers named; in due season the air is laden with fragrance, the flower harvest is at hand. Women and children gather the blossoms, which they place in little panniers, like fishermen's baskets, hung over the shoulders. They are then carried to the laboratory of flowers and weighed. In the laboratory the harvest of flowers has been anticipated. During the previous winter great quantities of grease, lard, and beef-suet have been collected, melted, washed, and clarified. The great success of this process depends on the absolute purity of the grease employed, and no pains are spared to this end. In each laboratory there are several thousand *chassis* (sashes), or framed glasses, upon which the grease to be scented is spread, and upon this grease the blossoms are sprinkled or laid. The *chasse en verre* is, in fact, a frame with a glass in it, as near as possible like a window-sash, only that the frame is two inches thicker, so that when one chasse is placed on another, there is a space of four inches between every two glasses, thus allowing room for blossoms. Every chasse, or sash, is about two feet long by eighteen inches broad, as here seen. The flower blossoms are changed every day, or every other day, as is convenient in regard to the general work of the laboratory or flowering of the plants. The same grease, how-

ever, remains in the *chasse* so long as the particular plant being used yields blossoms. Each time the fresh flowers are put on, the grease is “worked”—that is, serrated with a knife—so as to offer a fresh surface of grease to absorb odour. The grease being inflowered in this way for three weeks or more—in fact, so long as the plants produce blossoms—is at last scraped off the *chasse*, melted, strained, and poured into tin canisters, and is now fit for exportation.

Fat or oil is perfumed with these same flowers by the process of maceration; that is, infusion of the flowers in oil or melted fat. For this end, purified fat is melted in a *bain marie*, or warm bath, and the fresh blossoms are infused in it for several hours. Fresh flowers being procured, the spent blossoms are strained away, and new flowers added repeatedly, so long as they can be procured. The *bain marie* is used in order to prevent the grease becoming too hot from exposure to the naked fire; so long as the grease is fluid, it is warm enough. Oil does not require to be warmed, but improved results are obtained when it is slightly heated.

Jasmine and tube-rose produce best perfumed grease by enfleurage, but rose, orange, and acacia give more satisfactory products by maceration; while violet and jonquil grease is best obtained by the joint processes—enfleurage followed by maceration.

A *chasse en fer* is for the enfleurage of oil. In the place of glass, the space is filled with a wire net; on which is laid a *molleton*, or thick cotton fabric—moleskin, soaked with oil; on this the flowers are laid, just as with solid grease. In due time—that is, after repeated changing the flowers—the oil becomes fragrant, and it is then pressed out of the moleskin cloth. Oil of jasmine, tube-rose, &c., are prepared in this way.

Olive oil, or fresh Palm oil when the former is not procurable, is admirably adapted for inflowering, for it is obvious

that bodies which have no odour of their own, are more easily perfumed than those in which the original odour has to be overcome before they smell of the substance with which they are odorated.

In order now to obtain the perfume of these flowers in the form used for scenting handkerchiefs, we have to infuse the scented fat or oil, made by any of the above methods, in strong alcohol.

In extracting the odour from solid fat it has to be chopped up fine as suet is chopped or melted, and then put into the spirit, and left to infuse for about a month. In the case of scented oil it has to be repeatedly agitated with the spirit. The result is, that the spirit extracts all the odour from the fatty body, becoming itself "perfume;" while the grease again becomes odourless; thus is procured the essence of jasmine, essence of orange flowers, essence of violets, and others already named, rose, tube-rose, acacia, and jonquil.

It is remarkable that these flowers yield perfumes which, either separate or mixed in various proportions, are the types of nearly all flower odours; thus, when jasmine and orange flowers are blended, the scent produced is like sweet-pea; when jasmine and tube-rose are mixed the perfume is that of the hyacinth. All the various bouquets and nosegays, such as "frangipanni," "white roses," "sweet daphne," are made upon this principle.



